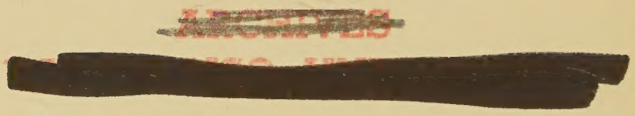
# Illinois in the Fifties



Illinois in the Fifties

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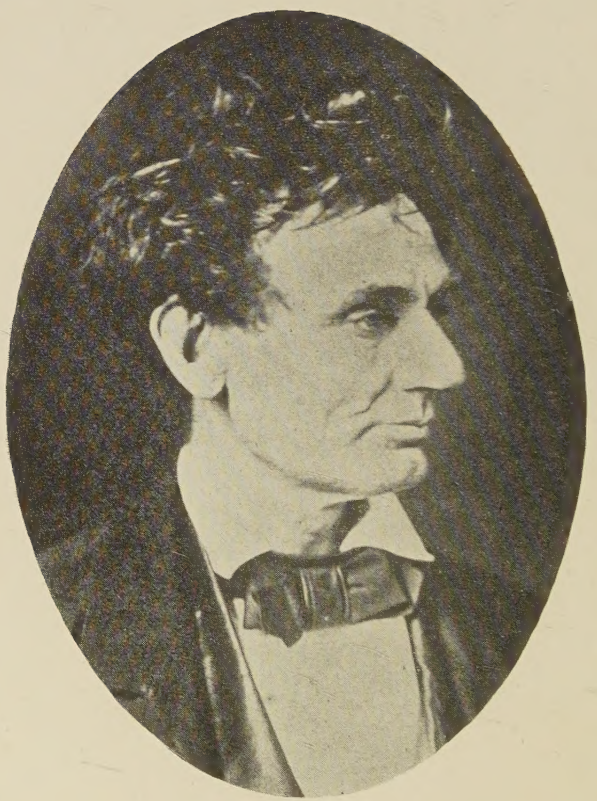
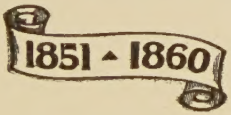


Lincoln in the Fifties.
(From historical collection of H. W. Fay, DeKalb, Ill.)

# Illinois in the Fifties

OR

# A Decade of Development




BY

1893

CHARLES BENEULYN JOHNSON, M. D.
Author of Muskets and Medicine

## Illinois Centennial Edition

There are no days like the good old days,—
The days when we were youthful;
When humankind was pure of mind,
And speech and deeds were truthful.
—*Eugene Field.*

Flanigan-Pearson Co., Publishers
Champaign, Ill.
1918

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TO THE MEMORY OF
THAT DEVOTED BAND OF ILLINOISANS,
WHO IN THE FIFTIES,
UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
STEADFASTLY OPPOSED THE FURTHER EXTENSION
OF HUMAN SLAVERY,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

47707

*There were Giants in Those Days.*

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## FOREWORD

1918

One hundred years ago Illinois became a State and began making history. In that history no period is of more interest and importance than the Fifties, which in the fullest sense was a *decade* of *development*. During that decade in wealth and population the State advanced from eleventh to fourth place among her sister commonwealths. Meantime railway construction increased more than tenfold and finally the total mileage in operation in Illinois was exceeded by Ohio alone. In 1860 the Prairie State distanced all rivals in the production of corn, wheat and oats.

But beyond and above all this in that remarkable decade Illinois became the arena upon which was staged one of the world's great forensic contests—the Lincoln-Douglas debate of 1858.

In this volume the author has endeavored to describe things, people and conditions as he saw and knew them in the Fifties.

CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS, 1918. C. B. J.

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## CHAPTER I.

### The Pioneer and His Environment.

No past is dead to us, but only sleeping.
—*Helen Hunt.*

Wondrous and awful are thy silent halls,
O kingdom of the past!
—*James Russell Lowell.*

With the advent of the early fifties the real pioneer days in Illinois were nearing their end. The one-room log cabin was giving place to the frame dwelling of one, two, or more rooms. The water-mill had nearly, or quite, displaced the last horse-mill.

The slow, but always dependable, ox-team and heavy ox wagon, were fast disappearing before the approach of the quicker moving horse-team and lighter horse wagon. The wooden mold-board plow was being relegated to fence corners, and in its place was a much lighter and more sightly implement made largely of iron and steel.

In lieu of the hoe, which many had used for the cultivation of growing corn, a bright, well-scoured "diamond-plow", drawn by a quick-stepping horse, made relatively rapid and easy work. In place of the reap-hook and "cradle" for cutting grain, and the scythe for mowing grass, a combined reaper and mower did the work of ten men.

Perhaps a brief description of the cabin which the frame house was rapidly displacing may interest the reader who today lives in the modern home with its

steam-heat, electric lights and a thousand and one conveniences which money and inventive genius have brought within the reach of the average American.

The pioneer's heat-plant was simple in the extreme, though its fireplace and hearth made of flat stones occupied a no inconsiderable portion of one end of his one-room cabin. The chimney was made of split sticks of wood and clay and ran up on the outside of one end of the building. The clay was first made into a kind of mortar, and with this the sticks were freely plastered. The fireplace was so large that backlogs for it had to be rolled in at the door, instead of being carried in by hand. The forestick and other pieces of wood rested on "dog-irons" and were thus kept about four inches above the hearth level.

At one side of the fireplace, on pegs driven in the logs, hung pots, kettles, skillets, pans and various other utensils used by the good housewife in cooking. There, also, stood the cupboard made of smoothly dressed walnut boards, and which contained knives, forks, spoons and the blue-edged dishes which adorned the table at meal time. In the corner was a rude shelf resting on oak pegs, and upon this was a wooden bucket filled with water for drinking and cooking purposes. Hanging on a peg beside the water bucket was a gourd, the pioneer's drinking vessel. Next came the dining-table, with both leaves folded down, standing snugly against the wall out of the way.

On the other side of the fireplace, six feet from the floor, just beneath the ceiling and resting on wooden hooks, was the long-barreled, flint-lock, Kentucky squirrel rifle. The stock ran the whole length of the barrel, was made of white walnut and from much use, added

to the polishing of the gunsmith, had become as smooth as ivory. The mounting was all of well-finished brass. Near the butt of the stock and sunk in it, was a cavity one inch in width, one inch deep and five inches in length, covered with a brass lid which opened by one spring and was held in place by another. It was used for carrying tallow with which to lubricate the "patchen" that was made to cover the bullet when loading the rifle. Hanging from one of the hooks on which the gun rested, was the bullet pouch and powder horn. The pouch was made of strong leather, usually buckskin, and had two or three pockets for carrying bullets, cloth for patchen and such other articles as a hunter might need. The powder horn was made from a cow's horn and had the larger end securely closed; in the smaller end was fitted a stopper that could be easily removed and put back in place. Both the bullet pouch and powder horn were supplied with straps for throwing over the shoulder when it was desired to carry them. Hanging from the other wooden hook was a large horn open at both ends, but with the smaller of these smoothed and beveled so it could be placed to the lips for the purpose of blowing. This the hunter used to call the hounds when they went beyond the sound of his voice.

Leaning against the wall in the corner under the butt of the rifle was a double-barreled shotgun, from the muzzle of which hung a powder-horn and shot-pouch; the latter containing supplies of shot of various sizes and also a box of percussion caps. The shotgun and its equipment were more especially for the boys in the family, *pater familias* preferring the rifle. Against the wall near the shotgun was a candle-stand, a little table with a top about two feet square, under this a drawer,

all supported on slender, turned legs and made of walnut. On the candle-stand was a large Bible and a "this-year's" Almanac. Above the candle-stand was the *one* window in the cabin, which contained six 6 x 6 panes of glass.

A little distance from the window was a door which swung on wooden hinges, fastened with a wooden latch, and raised and lowered by a strong leather string, which passed through a hole and left the free end hanging outside. Of nights when the pioneer wished to lock his door, he had but to pull in the string; when morning came and he desired to unlock his door, he had but to pass the string through the hole just above the latch. Hence the origin of the pioneer phrase, "The latch-string is on the outside"—the equivalent of saying: "Come in; you are welcome!"

In the corner behind the door was a bed upon which was a huge feather tick and over which were the usual sheets and blankets; but over all a beautiful, home-woven counterpane, usually blue and white, but frequently pure white. In the opposite corner was another bed, the precise duplicate of the first, and on both were two large pillows in cases or slips, with beautifully-wrought and embroidered edges. Under one of the beds would often be a trundlebed, which ran on rollers. When bedtime came the trundlebed was rolled out for the small children to sleep in; and in the morning rolled back under the bed, out of sight and out of the way. Around the exposed sides of the bed would be a valance, or a kind of curtain, which reached from just above the bedrail to the floor. Sometimes the valance was made of white muslin and sometimes of some colored material. In the event there was no trundle-

bed the space under the bed was always utilized for storing some article or articles. It may have been a trunk, a basket of peaches, or in cold weather, maybe the half of a just-butchered hog might be put there to be kept over night.

Against the wall between the beds was a chest, often called "chist". In this was kept the nicer counterpanes and pillowslips, the women's Sunday clothes and certain articles of men's wear. At one end of the chest, and just beneath the lid, was a little box or till, opening with a lock and key, and in this were kept the deeds and other valuable papers and smaller keepsakes.

In the better cabins the floors were made of evenly-sawed oak boards, but as these became seasoned they grew narrower and left cracks between, through which the cold wind came in winter. In the ruder cabins the floors were made of puncheons—that is to say, slabs flat on one side and rounded on the other. Puncheon floors were always laid with the flat side up. Overhead were strong heavy beams often of unhewed logs. On these beams were rough boards that constituted the ceiling of the main room and the floor of the lóft, which by courtesy might have been called the attic. The loft was reached by a ladder that started from the cabin-floor and ran up alongside the Kentucky rifle, and reached the loft through a trapdoor. In the loft was sometimes a bed where some members of the family could sleep in case there was company—and here of winter mornings the sleepers would sometimes waken to find their beds covered with snow that had sifted in between the shingles, or rather clapboards, of the roof.

Hanging from the rafters would be festoons of dried apples, dried pumpkin, dried peaches, peppers, bunches

of sage for seasoning the sausage; bunches of penny-royal to "sweat" the sick ones; bunches of boneset to "break the ager"; strings of stuffed sausage; chunks of dried beef; and last, old hats, caps and various other articles that had seen better days. Among the last might be the coat that grandfather, a Revolutionary veteran, wore at the battle of Guilford Court House.

Crowded as was the cabin, it at times had one more thing that took up no little floor-space, namely, a loom for weaving cloth, carpets, etc. The loom of that day was a crude, heavy, awkwardly constructed contrivance, made almost entirely of wood. But, cumbersome and unwieldy as it was, the housewife somehow managed to weave in plenty upon it, jeans for the men-folks of the family, and linsey for the women-folks. Indeed, some of the more skillful, wove pretty coverlets, handsome counterpanes and beautiful pillowcases, besides other articles of use and ornament.

Another thing that claimed cabin floor-space was the spinning-wheel, a true running-mate of the loom. This was usually operated by a young woman, and her quick walking to-and-fro and other alert movements, accompanied by the rhythmical hum of the fast-revolving wheel, are memories that will never pass from the mind of the elderly man or woman.

But before the wool could be spun it had to be carded; an operation that was generally left to an elderly female if there was such a one in the family. And a picture, which can never be effaced from memory's tablet, is that of a grandmother, her placid features framed in the frill of her cap, seated in a low, split-bottom chair, and in her hand a pair of cards which she was slowly pull-

Weaving on a Hand-Loom.
(Courtesy of W. A. Kelsoe, St. Louis, Mo.)

Spinning-Wheel.
(Courtesy W. A. Kelsoe, St. Louis, Mo.

ing to-and-fro while the wool between their teeth was working into a roll.

Speaking of caps, in this connection, it may not be out of place to say that in that day most women of forty-five and beyond wore these; they were usually white in color, made of some light cotton material and faced with a frill of some kind of lace work. These caps came down below the ears, were becoming, and grew more and more so with advancing years.

Three times every day a meal was cooked on the stone hearth and over the fireplace. Three times every day the table would be pulled out in front of the fireplace, the leaves raised, a cloth spread over it, and the blue-edged dishes placed upon it in proper order. One of the most useful cooking utensils was the "spider", a skillet with legs and a heavy iron cover the outer edge of which was turned up to hold the red coals that were put upon it in baking. In the center of the rounded top of the lid and part of it, was an open handle, a sort of flattened ring of cast iron into which the poker, or one prong of the tongs, could be pushed for lifting the lid when it was hot, or loaded with coals. Under the spider, and between its legs, red coals would be thrust when cooking or baking some article, such as biscuit, bread, pies, cake, potatoes, etc. The tea-kettle was heated directly on the fire, the coffee-pot boiled on coals placed on the hearth; meat, eggs, bacon and ham were fried in a skillet placed on the burning wood-fire. In a much larger spider, called an oven, light wheat-bread and light corn-bread were baked. All old people were of one mind in asserting that food cooked at the old-time fireplace had a taste and flavor that the new-fangled cook-stove could never impart.

But stooping over the hearth, with her face and head over the fire, was trying to the housekeeper. Then sometimes a stick of wood would unexpectedly burn in two, and over would turn the tea-kettle; or maybe worse yet, a pot with contents for a boiled dinner; this would result in water, or meat and turnips, spilling and running over the fire and hearth, a cloud of steam and smoke, and the fire all but "put out".

The fire shovel that stood against the chimney jamb was a much used implement. With it the housewife punched the fire in an effort to encourage its burning; and with it she put coals under, and on, the spider; and on the hearth for heating other vessels. Beside the shovel were the tongs provided with two long arms, with flattened extremities, for picking up burning embers. Hanging against the wall was a pair of pothooks for lifting various hot or sooty vessels.

With the advent of the fifties, matches came into general use. Previous to this the fire on the hearth was never expected to go out. If it did, some one went to a neighbor's with shovel or tongs and brought back some live coals.

If the neighbor lived at a distance, or the weather was inclement, some powder would be put in the pan of the flint-lock rifle, a piece of cotton held beside it, then, when trigger was pulled, a spark from the flint ignited the powder; it in turn set fire to the cotton, and this while blazing, was hurriedly transferred to paper in the fireplace where a little later a fire would be roaring.

The food was plain and simple. In pioneer days corn bread and salted, smoked pork were the staples. Later wheat bread was added, varied with cakes made

from buckwheat flour. Coffee of mornings, and tea at night, were for the older members of the family. The younger members drank water and milk, and with the latter, all frequently ate corn mush. In winter selected kernels of corn were treated with lye which removed the hull, after which the grains were boiled or fried. This was "big hominy" and was a wholesome, satisfying article of diet. A few paces from the kitchen door was the smokehouse, a roughly constructed building, without ceiling or plaster. It was in this that the newly salted pork was hung to be smoked by keeping under it a smothered fire, preferably of hickory wood. Hams cured in this way had a rare flavor no other curing process could impart. On shelves in the smokehouse thrifty housekeepers had jars of lard and others of preserves, pickles and, maybe, a keg of molasses, together with a barrel of flour and possibly a sack of sugar, and other et cetera.

With the coming of early frost one neighbor would kill a hog and divide it up among his friends. Perhaps a little later another would butcher a small beef and divide this up in the same way, all "without money and without price." Thus the *circle* had a taste of fresh meat which otherwise would have spoiled, as no one thought of putting up ice.

Almost no one had a cellar, and with the open method in vogue for building houses, in cold weather, when the fire went down, things would freeze. Of cold nights water pitchers and other fragile articles were emptied of their liquid contents, otherwise broken vessels were likely to be found next morning.

Apples and peaches were pared, cut into slices and spread on boards, or on low sheds, where they would

dry in the sun after several days' exposure. Thus placed they attracted and were, at times, covered with flies, wasps and other insects. Fortunately, fruit dried in this way, through stewing, or some similar method of cooking, was, practically, always heated to a high temperature before going on the table. Pumpkins were not infrequently peeled, sliced and dried and when winter came, eaten with relish.

The present method of canning fruit and vegetables did not come in vogue till about the middle of the fifties; and when first introduced was a much more complicated process than it is today. Lack of knowledge and facilities for preserving fruit made the use of preserves much more common than now, and in quantities that would not be deemed justifiable today.

Wild blackberries grew in abundance and were of much better flavor than the cultivated varieties we have now. Wild raspberries were less abundant than wild blackberries and the same was true of wild strawberries, but both had an especially fine taste and flavor.

Wild plums, wild crabapples and wild grapes were gathered in the fall, and of these the thrifty housewife made preserves, jam and other toothsome preparations.

Wild grapes grew in two varieties, summer and winter. Summer grapes ripened in late summer, were larger and much sweeter than winter grapes. Indeed, the wild summer grapes are said to be the stock from which that staple, the Concord grape, was derived. Both varieties flourished in the timber and their vines sometimes grew to the tops of tall trees. Winter grapes were sour, but after frost became much sweeter and more tempting to the palate.

Another wild fruit that came in after frost was the

persimmon. This grew on a tree that equaled in size a medium appletree. In late summer the persimmon attained the dimensions of a small apple, was a rich, beautiful orange in color and presented a most tempting appearance to the uninitiated. But woe to the tenderfoot who was so unwary as to bite into its supposedly luscious meat; for instead of the anticipated sweet and agreeable taste, the tempted one would experience a "puckery" sensation that seemed about to draw the mucous membrane of his mouth and parts adjacent into a hard knot! After frost the persimmon took on a pink hue and became mellow and luscious to the taste. Freezing in some way neutralized the tannin with which before frost the fruit was filled and rendered astringent and puckery to the mouth and palate.

Pawpaws were another wild fruit that grew in the timber and ripened in the fall, but unlike some referred to above, seemed to prefer dense woods. This fruit, however, was not relished by all, though much liked by some.

Going to mill was nearly always done on horseback. A sack of wheat or shelled corn would be put on a horse with the grain divided so there would be an equal amount in each end, and on this a boy would be mounted and started for the water-mill, which was never more than four or five miles away. Arrived there the miller would take the sack in the mill and pour its contents into the hopper, from which it ran in between the two millstones, one of which, connected with a water wheel in the stream beneath, revolved while the other was stationary. Both were sharply grooved properly to crush and grind the grain that passed between them. For his service the miller took toll, that is a certain percent-

age of the grain, or as usually said in this sense, the grist. (See pages 91-95.)

People made their own soap with lye and fat. The lye was made by leaching wood ashes and the fat came through the utilization of all kinds of meat scraps, some of which were sometimes repulsive in both appearance and smell. However, the strong lye with which the scraps were mixed corrected all this.

To make lye from wood ashes an ash hopper was necessary. This the pioneer sometimes made from a section of a large hollow log which, with its two ends sawed off square, was placed on inclined boards a little above the ground. In the lower end notches would be cut, and the "ash-hopper" thus made would be filled with wood ashes, water would be poured upon this and in percolating through would be converted into lye, a dark, coffee-colored fluid which found its way out through the notches in the bottom and down into a vessel underneath. This was the pioneer's ash-hopper. Sometimes clapboards would be used and at others a common barrel would be utilized by knocking out one head, boring some holes through the bottom, placing on inclined boards, and filling it with ashes.

When a sufficient amount of lye was obtained it was put in the "big kittle", which was placed out of doors and a fire kindled beneath it. When the lye began to boil meat scraps were put in and all well stirred, and in due time the contents assumed a putty-like consistency and had in addition all the other qualities of soft soap, a most useful article in the pioneer household. The iron kettle was an essential in every family in early days and fulfilled various uses, as we shall see later.

Most of the early settlers got their drinking water

from springs. Those who came later dug wells, some of which failed to afford the needed supply of water for drinking, cooking and other purposes. After one or two such disappointments the property owner would sometimes call in the aid of the "waterwitch." The waterwitch was a man imbued with the belief that a forked stick, called a divining rod, held in his hands, would be drawn down by some mysterious force when over a vein of water. For this purpose a forked piece of witch-hazel was usually selected. With a prong of this tightly grasped in each hand, his arms extended at full length, the point of the fork pointing upwards, the waterwitch would slowly and gravely walk over a spot where it was desired to sink a well.

In the event water was found where the waterwitch directed a well to be dug the fact was seized upon and made much of and heralded abroad as proof of his powers of divination. On the other hand, if the sunken well turned out to be a *dry hole* in the ground, this fact was passed over and forgotten—so charitable is ever human nature, when the mysterious is on trial.

However, as to the divining rod, there were people who affirmed that when this was properly held in the hands of certain persons the point of the fork, or apex, was forcibly drawn down if there happened to be a vein of water in the ground beneath.

Very few of the early settlers had cisterns and rain water was obtained by catching it in a barrel into which the water from the eaves of the house was conveyed by a long, slanting board. In warm weather, if this rain-water was not used soon, it would come to be filled with "wiggle-tails".

In that period people dressed much more plainly than

they do today and most of them literally wore out their clothing. All working people and many others wore patched garments. For every day many men wore jeans and the women linsey; both home-woven and home-spun from wool grown on the backs of home-grown sheep. Winter and summer home-knit woolen socks were worn. For coloring these home-made articles, copperas (sulphate of iron), indigo, madder and various barks, especially that of the whiteoak, were used. Underclothes were not generally worn and many a boy of two generations ago reached manhood before he got his first overcoat.

On Sundays and special occasions most men dressed up in their "store-clothes", which were far from being as well-fitting and well-made as today. Furthermore they were much more liable to fade after being worn for a time. Few men wore "store" suspenders, and working people all wore "galluses", home-knit from woolen yarn, or made of strong cotton cloth.

Working men, for every-day wear, had what were known as "hunting-shirts", made of jeans, cut loosely and in length to reach to about the bottom of the pockets of the trousers. In that day trousers were usually called "breeches" and vests, "roundabouts".

An outer garment called a wammus was much worn by men. It was made of wool, was ample in width and had no skirt. It was held in place by a belt and had a button at the throat. The space inside of it around the body was so large as to serve its owner as a sack for carrying prairie chickens or squirrels when he went hunting. In fact it is reported to have done service in carrying home green corn, apples, peaches and other

pleasant provender in the night. It was scarcely large enough to carry watermelons.

As the fifties advanced professional and well-dressed men wore shawls instead of overcoats. These were large, made of thick, heavy woolen and were nearly always gray in color. Watches were very much less common than now; the teacher, the preacher and the doctor always carried a watch, but scarcely anyone else. These were nearly all of silver and a gold watch was seldom seen. Likewise clocks were not nearly so common as now, and working people were in the habit of referring to so-many hours "by-sun" instead of saying it was this or that hour by the clock. For illustration, in the event it was thought it would be two hours before the sun would go down, this was referred to as "two hours by-sun", and the same way in the forenoon.

Boots came in fashion in the early fifties, but most working men wore heavy shoes, called "brogans". Those who made more pretensions to dress would go to the village shoemaker and have tight-fitting boots made; so tight, indeed, that they had to go through a process of "breaking-in" which consisted of wearing them a few hours and then resting the feet in an old pair. Every house had its boot-jack for pulling off tight-fitting boots, and those hard to get off from being water-soaked. Rubber goods did not come into general use till the fifties had well advanced, hence rubber boots and rubber overshoes were seldom seen. When it was very muddy and when the snow was melting, men and boys would go all day with wet feet. It was sought to make leather foot-wear water-proof by greasing this with a mixture of beeswax and tallow, but while this helped it was only partially effective.

As elsewhere stated, buggies were very few, and a great deal of the travel was on horseback. In stormy weather men wore heavy overcoats and "leggins" made of strong, thick cloth, long enough to reach from the knees to the heels, and wide enough to go once and a half round the leg, to which they were attached by strong cords. When the roads were muddy the leggings would often become covered with mud and water, but when removed the trousers beneath would be found dry and clean.

It was the custom for men to carry papers in their hats, so that a constable or other official when about to serve a writ or summons would turn his head to one side and carefully take off his hat, and search through its contents for the desired instrument. In this connection it is interesting to note that Lincoln in preparing one of his great speeches made notes on scraps of paper which he kept in his hat.

Type of Log House common in Illinois in the Early 50's.
(A. C. McClurg and Co., by permission)

Pioneer Fireplace, Cooking Utensils, Etc.
(Loaned by O. W. Converse, Springfield, Ill.)

## CHAPTER II.

### A Progressive Pioneer and the Evolution of a Home.

Every beginning is hard; but most the beginning of a household. Many are human wants and everything daily grows dearer.—*Goethe.*

This was the way to thrive and he was blest.
—*Shakespeare.*

While in very young manhood Benjamin Jones, in 1816, came to the Territory of Illinois, where in due time he built a cabin, married a young wife and began life in earnest in the virgin Land of Promise.

With the lapse of time little Joneses had arrived, and their presence made more room desirable, and the father, ever ready to reach out and improve his surroundings, built another cabin the size of the first and ten feet distant from it. The space between the cabins was floored, and in warm weather served as a sort of porch and a place for the dining table. Time went steadily on, and other little Joneses came on the scene and created the need for yet more room. This crying need caused Benjamin Jones literally to "raise the roof" of both cabins, extend this over the space between, and enclose it besides, thus making, for that period, a commodious house of six rooms.

In that era it was the custom of the pioneers to accommodate the traveling public by giving them shelter and food. Benjamin Jones fell into this way and kept

it up till his patrons became too numerous for the accommodations he had at their disposal. In this emergency he added a dining-room and kitchen, with upstairs, to the rear of his house, and at the same time remodeled the older part, by weatherboarding it, and putting in modern doors, windows and brick chimneys. Thus enlarged, the structure served its purpose for many years. However, with the advent of the early fifties the house was again remodeled and added to by building, at its front, a large room on the main floor and one above it on the second floor, with a porch on either side. Blinds, which were just coming in use, were put on all the windows and the house was given a coat of paint, something of an innovation in that locality. When completed the structure became one of the most attractive dwellings in all the country around. This house, whose first rooftree was reared nearly a hundred years ago, is yet standing—that is, the main part of it. The last portion added—the two rooms of frame in front—at the end of a half-century became dilapidated and was removed, leaving the part first built of logs, in seeming condition to weather the storms and winds of a second century.

Benjamin Jones was as progressive and enterprising in other matters as in improving and keeping his house up to date. No sooner had the rank prairie grass been turned under by the plow than he planted out apple, peach, pear, and cherry trees. Meantime, sad to tell, he chopped down some noble forest trees, that had the hardihood and vitality to encroach on the ever-hardy prairie grass, and planted in their places relatively insignificant evergreens. Fortunately a few oaks and hickories were spared and today tower above and in every

way overshadow the sickly pines and cedars planted sixty years ago or more.

As already said, Benjamin Jones was progressive, and consequently his fields were planted with the best corn, the best wheat and the best oats that could be obtained. On his pastures were seen the very best strains of cattle and horses, and in winter these were well housed in stables, while near-by barns were filled with well-cured hay and plenty of corn and oats.

In a garden of ample size grew all kinds, and the latest varieties, of vegetables. Asparagus and rhubarb, or pie-plant, were then novelties; nevertheless, he cultivated them in his always up-to-date garden.

But perhaps the pride of his heart was his orchard, where always could be found the very latest varieties of apples, pears, peaches, quinces, cherries and other fruit. Insect pests were far less numerous in that day than now and consequently fruit matured without interruption or blemish.

In the orchard devoted to peaches were fine, large Yellow Crawfords, and luscious White Crawfords. There was also a variety known as the Indian Blood peach, large as a teacup, blood red within and meat that would "tempt the gods".

In the apple orchard the first fruit to ripen were the "Junes", with coats smooth as though varnished, almost black in color, meat as white as cotton, and that ripened late in the month of June, as the name would imply.

Early in July came the Harvest Apple, yellow in color, mellow when fully ripe, and sweet and attractive in taste. In early fall the best eating apple of all was ready for use. This was the Rambo, which had a rich taste and rare flavor all its own—an apple that had over its

surface fine streaks, between which were small speckles. A little later the Redstreak ripened—a large, fine apple, its whole surface covered with distinct red stripes from which it derived its name. Brown Russets also ripened early. As the name would imply, the coats of these were brown. They were also rough and often had on them warty-like outgrowths; but strange to say, these in no way detracted from appearance and character of that old-time favorite among apples, the Brown Russet. The housewife always prized them for baking and when in the oven they exuded a caramel-like substance that was the delight of the children. Later came the Winesap, a firm, red, smooth apple; and later still Jennetings, Rhode Island Greenings, especially fine apples, and Romanites, Big and Little, but as unlike as two apples well could be. The Big Romanite was a winter apple with a yellowish-green coat on which were small scattered streaks and specks. The Little Romanite was deep red, its coat seemingly polished, it was so smooth. It had a sweet taste, was a great "keeper" and was in fine condition the spring subsequent to its gathering.

October was apple-picking month, and it was then that everyone got busy at Benjamin Jones' place. Ladders of various lengths, baskets and buckets provided with wooden hooks for attaching to limbs or ladder-rounds, and long wooden hooks for pulling in limbs, were the appliances the apple-pickers needed. With bucket in hand the picker, after placing his ladder against an apple branch heavily loaded with fruit, would go up, attach his vessel to a branch or round and then carefully gather the apples and place them in the bucket. Having picked all those within reach, he would use his long hook to pull in other loaded limbs. His vessel filled, he would

go down to the ground and carefully empty the apples in a wagon, or maybe put them in a pile on the ground, and so on till the last apple on the tree was gathered and handled so carefully that no bruises were inflicted.

The apples that had been bruised and those that fell of their own accord, the wind-falls, were put to various uses; some were cut and dried, some made into apple butter and some into cider at the cidermill. This was, so to speak, homemade, and consisted of a round, barrel-like structure of strong boards held together by strong iron hoops, in which was fitted a circular head, made of thick boards and which worked up and down and was attached to the center of a long, strong lever, one end of which was securely attached to a firm post, while at the other a heavy weight exerted great pressure on the head and thus squeezed the cider out of the pomace—that is, the apples that had been ground to pulp in the crusher. Two upright wooden wheels, two feet long, with cogs their whole length and four inches deep, comprised the essential part of the crusher, which was encircled with a strong casing and through the top of this the axle of one of the wooden wheels connected with a long, horizontal sweep or lever, at one end of which a horse was hitched and furnished the rotary motion by going round and round. Just over the cogged wheels was a hopper containing the apples to be ground. The pomace found its way into a vat and from the vat was scooped into the press, from the bottom of which the rich-colored cider streamed out and ran into a large tub. From the tub the cider was dipped, and through a funnel conveyed into barrels. When filled the barrels were left for a time with their bungs open, and meantime, the

small boy with a convenient rye-straw sucked "nectar" to his heart's content.

In the early fifties the interior of one of Benjamin Jones's large barns was used as a threshing floor. From the fields the wheat was hauled in and scattered over this floor where horses, with boys on their backs, were made to go round and round in the straw, causing each grain to fall from its delicate, film-like cover. After tramping the grain for a few minutes the horses were taken away, when men with forks removed the straw and then with scoops took up the grain and chaff and put it in a large pile. Then the barn floor was again covered with wheat, horses were ridden over it, the straw was removed, the wheat and chaff added to what had gone before, and so on till the whole product from the fields had been "tramped" over. Then the fan-mill was placed in proper position and one man turned it by a crank, while another shoveled in the wheat and chaff. The wind, generated by the fan-mill, blew away the chaff, and gravity caused the wheat to fall to the bottom and run out of a spout, free from impurities and ready for the miller.

Later came the threshing-machine which, in its first form, was called a "ground-hog" from the fact that it only threshed the grain, and did not separate it from the straw and chaff—indeed, left it precisely in the same condition it was on the barn floor when the horses had done their "tramping." Consequently men had to fork away the straw and run the wheat and chaff through a fan-mill, before this ground-hog threshed wheat was ready to be made into flour. However, it was not long till fan and separator became part of the threshing machine, and the golden grain, clean and ready for market, ran from one of the sides of the improved thresher. In

the old days threshing was always done by horse-power and never with steam and an engine, as is uniformly the custom today.

A good many people piled their wood in the front yard, and chopped it there with the result that the chips flew all about and created an unsightly litter. Not so with Benjamin Jones, the Progressive Pioneer! About his house was a lawn interspersed with shrubbery and shade trees, but separated from it by a fence, and yet convenient to the house, was a woodyard of ample dimensions, where wood hauled from the timber was placed and chopped in fire-lengths.

At the rear of this woodyard and convenient to the kitchen was an outhouse with several apartments; one of these, attached to the main structure by a shed-roof, was the smokehouse where the meat was salted, smoked and kept; another, the principal room, was a sort of place for doing things which the women did not care to have done in the house, such as rendering lard, making soap, boiling down cider, making apple butter, and washing the family linen. In this room was a large fireplace, in that day, needed for doing the above-named things. Another thing done at this fireplace was molding candles. Benjamin Jones provided his household with several sets of candle-molds, each of which would mold a dozen candles. These were made of heavy tin, their tops, for shaping the big-end of the candle, connected by a common receiver, and their several tips just large enough to admit the small end of a candle-stick. When the housewife was about to make candles she first of all put a wick in each single mold. This she did by taking a piece twice the length of the candle, folding it upon itself, twisting its smaller end and passing it down and out at the bottom of the

mold, leaving the double end at the top through which a short stick passed to hold it in place. When each separate mold was thus threaded, so to speak, melted tallow was poured in till all were filled. After filling, the molds were set aside, till the melted tallow could have time to "set," a matter of a few hours, when each candle was pulled out by the stick that had been passed through the base of the wick. In the end the housewife found herself in possession of one, two, three, four or more, dozen candles, all depending on how many molds she had filled.

Another thing done beside the fireplace in this outhouse was making apple-butter. In the beautiful month of October after apples were ripe and cider-making had gotten under way the thrifty housewife began to make apple-butter, peach-butter and preserves. For this purpose Benjamin Jones had a brass kettle that held perhaps ten gallons. Filled about two-thirds full of cider, this kettle was placed over a fire and heated while apples, peeled and quartered, were stirred in till all was cooked into a soft pulp, or in other words, acceptable apple-butter.

Peach-butter was made in much the same way, and likewise plum-butter and other butter varieties that a thrifty housekeeper well knew how to make.

In one corner of the large room was a loom for weaving coarse cloth and carpets. In the forties, as elsewhere noted, most of the men wore jeans and the women linsey, both woolen in texture. Till near the end of the forties most of the floors were bare, but with the coming of the fifties, women began to weave rag carpets. These carpets, as their name signifies, were made of rags, rags of various hues and texture. All of the carpets then were

home-made and home-woven on the rude, awkwardly-constructed looms of that time.

In his younger days Benjamin Jones had been something of a hunter and was a good shot. He still kept his old Kentucky rifle, but rarely used it for any purpose other than for shooting beeves and hogs at butchering time. At the fireplace in the outhouse he sometimes molded bullets for his rifle. For this purpose he had a pair of bullet-molds which, when closed, looked much like a pair of pliers. However, between their closed jaws was a round opening into which melted lead was poured and allowed to cool, when, by opening the handle-blades, a leaden bullet would drop out, due to the fact that half of the mold was in either jaw of the appliance. As the lead cooled quickly, bullets could be molded rapidly, but always at the expense of some dross. Lead for bullets was always purchased in bars at the community store.

As before noted, Benjamin Jones was ever progressive, and was in the forefront of that progressive era in Illinois that had its inception near the beginning of the second half of the Nineteenth Century and that depended not a little upon the free influx into the State of California gold. For this reason the next chapter will be devoted to the discovery of gold in California, notwithstanding the fact that this event occurred in the late forties, instead of the fifties to which this work is more especially devoted.

## CHAPTER III

### The Gold-Seekers of the Late Forties.

What scenes they pass'd, what camps at morn,
What weary columns kept the road; . . . . .
What lines of yoked and patient steers!
What weary thousands pushing west!
—*Joaquin Miller.*

The great energy and all but irrepressible enterprise of Captain Sutter were most important factors in bringing about the epoch-making discovery of gold in California near the middle of the Nineteenth Century.

Captain John A. Sutter a native of Switzerland, came to California in 1839, and calling to his aid a number of Mexicans and friendly Indians, built a Fort, where now is located the City of Sacramento, at the junction of the American and Sacramento rivers. This Fort occupied an acre or more of ground, was surrounded by an adobe wall twenty feet high, and at two of its diagonally opposite corners, had two, two-story block-houses. Within the enclosure was a general store, a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop, and a room where Indian women made blankets and other articles of common use, indispensable to pioneers. Within the Fort there were also apartments for residence purposes.

Here Captain Sutter lived, managed his affairs and governed his employees and followers not unlike a Baron of the middle ages. Indeed, under Mexican law, he could inflict punishment up to the death penalty, if needs

be. But in justice to Captain Sutter it should be said that, if ever he was unjust or cruel in the exercise of authority, such fact is unknown.

But whatever Captain Sutter was or was not, he was most of all a man of affairs and at all times had an eye out for business. He supplied the pioneers, immigrants and travelers with staple articles of food for the inner man, and coarse, strong garments for the outer. He also kept a stock of things required by wagonmen and horsemen, such as harness, saddles, bridles and the thousand and one things needed in the wear and tear of frontier life. Further than this, he constructed a Tannery, where the hides bought from cattlemen were dressed.

When at the close of the Mexican war, California was ceded to the United States, Captain Sutter saw that there would be a heavy emigration from the States and consequently a greatly increased demand for lumber with which to construct houses for the incomers. Impressed with this idea he realized that a properly located sawmill would be a profitable investment. But where could a good site for a sawmill be found? Who could build and equip one? And who could run it as it should be run, after it was built? These were questions that came uppermost in Captain Sutter's mind after he had decided, if possible, to add a sawmill to his many other enterprises. In this frame of mind he had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of one James W. Marshall, a native of New Jersey, a mill-wright, a carpenter, an all-around handy man with a roving disposition, a rolling-stone, in fact, who doubtless had helped others to make money, but who, as yet, had made none for himself.

After talking the matter over it was agreed that Mar-

shall should find a suitable site and erect the mill, that Captain Sutter should furnish the money to purchase all needed appliances and material, that after it was finished Marshall should superintend the running of the mill, and that the profits should be equally divided between them.

As soon as the agreement was consummated Marshall disappeared from view and did not show himself again till the end of a month's time, when he reported to Captain Sutter that he had found an eligible site for a sawmill at Coloma, on the north fork of the American River, sixty-five miles distant by trail, forty-five as the crow flies. It was now late in the fall and no time was to be lost, so ox-carts and pack-mules were secured, loaded with such appliances and material as would be needed in the construction of the sawmill, and all, under the lead of Marshall, were promptly started on the trail to the far-away Coloma.

Having done what he could to get the sawmill under way, Captain Sutter dismissed it from his mind for the time, and busied himself with his numerous other affairs. Among the latter was a flouring-mill which he was building at Brighton not far distant from his fort.

Meanwhile, Marshall in the face of many obstacles reached his destination and there pushed the work on the sawmill with due energy and enterprise and by the middle of January the structure was almost ready to operate. However, at the last moment it was found that the race which carried off the water after it had done its work, was too shallow. To remedy this Marshall decided to try the experiment of opening wide the flood-gates and permitting the water to sweep through, out and over all. Accordingly one evening the gates were

opened and permitted to run all night. Next morning early Marshall went to the mill alone, closed the floodgates and proceeded to examine the result of his experiment. Much to his satisfaction he found the channel had been washed out till it was much wider and deeper. The loose earth had been washed down stream, but the heavier sand and gravel were yet in the channel. While examining the latter Marshall's attention was attracted by some shining lumps of mineral. Picking up one of these it was found to be heavy and bright yellow in color. Marshall could think of nothing having these characteristics except sulphuret of iron, but that he remembered is brittle. How was this? He hammered it between two pieces of rock and was delighted to find that it hammered out—that is, it was malleable!

By this time the other men had come to their work, and seeing them Marshall cried out, "Gold! Gold! I have found it!" But none of them was disposed to believe his words; indeed, they thought he was half crazy. Realizing that what he regarded as a valuable discovery was not to meet with appreciation at Coloma, he saddled a horse and with some specimens in his pocket started for Sutter's Fort, fast as the animal could carry him.

Captain Sutter we left so occupied with his many enterprises nearer home, that he gave little heed to the sawmill building at Coloma. But to the latter place the fates had decreed that his attention was soon to be drawn, and drawn irresistibly.

One day not far from January 20, 1848, Marshall rode up to the Fort, his horse in a lather of sweat and he himself, in a state of excitement. He immediately asked for a private interview with Captain Sutter and when this was granted he produced the specimens and told where

and how they were found. Captain Sutter was a well-informed man and went about the examination of the mineral in an intelligent and thorough manner. It so happened that he had in his library a copy of the British Enclycopedia and in his stores some nitro-muriatic acid. He consulted the cyclopedia, under the title of the article on gold, and was gratified to find the speciments possessed all the features and characteristics of that precious metal, and furthermore, reacted to all the tests at his command.

When at the conclusion of his investigations, Captain Sutter said that the mineral was undoubtedly gold, Marshall became excited and suggested that they at once go back to Coloma. This Captain Sutter was opposed to, but finally gave his word that he would go next day. Having exacted this promise from Captain Sutter, Marshall immediately mounted a fresh horse and started on his return trip. A cold winter rain was falling steadily and Marshall had not tasted a bite of food since meeting Captain Sutter, but these things did not deter him from riding fast as his horse would carry him.

Next morning it was still raining, but Captain Sutter, true to his promise, started on horseback for Coloma, having for company an Indian soldier and a vaquero. When they were well on their way they saw a man crawl out of the brush into the trail, a little distance in front of them, and upon approaching closer, found that it was Marshall, still under great excitement, who, it seemed, after reaching Coloma and looking about for a little time, mounted a fresh horse and started back on the trail hoping to meet Captaain Sutter, which, as we have seen, he fortunately did. The party rode forward rapidly and reached the millrace before nightfall. Here

the gates were opened wide and the water permitted to flow all night. Next morning a number of additional specimens were found in the bottom of the race and later Captain Sutter took these to a goldsmith, had them fashioned into a large ring, within which, was engraved the following: "The first gold discovered in January, 1848."

After looking around for a day or two, Captain Sutter returned to his fort. Before starting, however, he exacted a solemn promise from each of Marshall's employees that they would under no circumstances divulge the secret of the discovery. He realized that some of his irons, of which he had many, would burn if the discovery became generally known. But a secret, such as the one Captain Sutter was trying to keep under cover, was hard to hide. One W. P. Wimmer, with his wife and family, had a temporary abode near Marshall's mill. Mrs. Wimmer did the cooking for all the employees, among whom was a teamster who, upon arriving from the fort with a load of provisions, was told of what had happened in his absence, by his landlady, at whose table he was striving to satisfy a hungry man's appetite.

This teamster very naturally became interested, collected a few specimens and carried them with him when he returned to the fort. A little later he felt the need of some brandy and, recollecting his specimens, took these to the store of Brannan & Smith and sought to trade them for a bottle of the desired stimulant. Smith, one of the partners to whom the proposition was made, at once became indignant that some worthless mineral was thought good enough to exchange for his fine, choice brandy. In reply the teamster said the specimens were gold and he would be glad to leave the matter to the

judgment of Captain Sutter. As Brannan & Smith had their goods in a building that adjoined Sutter's fort, it was little trouble to follow the teamster's suggestion. Of course when squarely approached in the matter, Captain Sutter had to tell the whole story.

Smith told his partner, Brannan, all about the discovery. Brannan became so interested that he at once went to Coloma, looked around for a few days and became so impressed with the magnitude of the "find" that he returned to the fort, rented a larger room, bought a larger stock of goods and in various ways got ready for an inrush of people which he felt sure knowledge of the discovery would bring. Thus the secret was no longer a secret. "The cat was out of the bag."

As Captain Sutton feared, several of his irons were burned. At the tannery hides rotted in the vats; at the mill building at Brighton, all work ceased, for the reason that men could not be induced to do trifling, every-day work, when under their very feet rich mines of gold were, in a sense, beckoning them to come and unearth their hidden wealth.

After vainly endeavoring to stem the tide, Captain Sutter recalling the adage, "While in Rome do as the Romans do," called to his aid one hundred and fifty Indians and Sandwich Islanders, loaded a number of wagons with provisions, and started all on the trail that led to the mines at Coloma.

About a month after Marshall's discovery, one of his carpenters, whose name was Bennett, carried some of the specimens to San Francisco where they fell under the eyes of Isaac Humphrey, who had had experience in the gold mines of Georgia. From the size of the specimens and their general appearance Humphrey did not

hesitate to predict that the California mines would prove to be much richer than those of Georgia. Indeed, Humphrey was so impressed that he returned with Bennett to Coloma and after prospecting for a little time, built a rocker and went into the business of gold-washing and was richly rewarded. Very soon Humphrey had imitators who also built rockers and went to washing gold. More prospecting was done and this revealed the fact that the whole region around Coloma was richly gold-bearing. The news spread, but in that day of slow and uncertain communication it was received with incredulity in many quarters. However, immigrants began to come in freely, and finally in December, 1848, President Polk in his annual message, officially announced to the world that gold, in hitherto unheard of quantities, existed in the mines of California. In less than a month after President Polk's message the new year, 1849, was ushered in, and in a little time people began to pour into California from all quarters and continued to do so in unprecedented numbers. From this fact the year 1849 marked an era in the history of California gold and all who went to the new El Dorado then have since been known as *forty-niners.*

Of one forty-niner I have a very vivid remembrance —all the more vivid because this particular forty-niner was my father. And now of something pertaining to his experience I desire to speak.

Early in the spring of 1849, my father and three other men began making preparations for the contemplated trip to California. A special outfit was required for the long journey across the plains, over the Rocky Mountains and down the western slope that led to what all had come to look upon as a veritable *Land of Promise.*

The plains of that day are now the fertile corn and wheat fields of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. The outfit in which my father and his companions were interested consisted of a strong, heavy, made-to-order wagon, drawn by six oxen yoked together in pairs called "yokes". The wagon was covered with heavy ducking and in it were stored such things as were likely to be needed in making the long over-land journey, far from civilization and its supplies.

Among the things deemed essential may be named certain common tools, as handsaws, augers, axes and hatchets; such staple articles of food as bacon, flour, cornmeal, beans, coffee, sugar, salt and pepper; extra garments of strong, durable fiber; and last, but by no means least, rifles, other fire-arms and a good supply of powder and lead to make plenty of bullets. These last were necessary because the whole region west of the Missouri was infested with roving bands of Indians some of whom were disposed to be unfriendly. Further than this there were wolves, elk, deer, antelope, and buffalo in millions.

The family my father left behind consisted of a wife and five children ranging in age from a babe in arms to a daughter just budding into young womanhood; and strange to say, at this writing, sixty-six years later, all that family are alive, save the parents.

Arrived at St. Louis my father sold his horse and, after transacting some business, took passage on a steamboat for St. Joseph, Mo. At that time Asiatic Cholera was epidemic in all the river towns, as the following letter written by him will show:

St. Joseph, Mo., May 11, 1849.

*Dear Wife and Children:*

I take my pen in hand at this last opportunity of writing to let you know that I am yet alive, though it is a mercy I am not in my grave, having so long been in an atmosphere of cholera and disease. I am just recovering from a spell of disease, bearing all the symptoms of cholera except cramping, and, had I been alarmed, I should have fallen a victim to that disease as did a number on board.

The San Francisco had about 300 passengers, of respectable men mostly bound for California, of whom but two died, though our boat occupied twelve days in making her trip to this place. But be sure the cholera is on and along the river, the destruction of life being considerable on every boat. The most distressing scene occurred yesterday: The Steamboat Mary arrived having lost some forty of her crew and passengers, and not being permitted to land she went up (the river) and buried her dead. Then she returned and later steamed down the river to find a retreat for her sick and dying. Meantime, to see her deck crowded with women and children, who were not allowed to land, was indeed a melancholy spectacle. But enough of this—we are here and we trust safe. Our team is over the river and we expect to be on the plains this evening without hearing a word from you since I left home. In vain sought word at the Post Office. . . . . I should like to write about the difficulties of navigating the Missouri river and all about our trip and how near I came to losing my life.

. . . . .

Your affectionate Companion and Father,

James Johnson.

We received another letter written two weeks later at Fort Kearney, now Grand Island, Nebraska, and this proved to be the last one. In this letter he stated that 2,900 wagons had been registered at Fort Kearney, and this number was thought to comprise less than half the train.

The wagon trains making these overland trips were organized and under the command of leaders. Of nights the wagons were parked, the animals herded on the prairie grass, and well armed guards posted at all points of the compass. This course was rendered necessary to prevent possible raids by Indians. Two of the four men of a certain wagon were a father and son. The latter was just passing out of his teens, and although it was before the day of the dime novel, this youth became imbued with the idea that he would reach full manhood all the sooner if he could somehow manage to "kill his Indian." Unfortunately for all concerned, the opportunity for this came all too promptly and all too certainly. Meeting a lone Indian, the youth yielded to a murderous impulse, raised his gun, took aim and fired. His victim fell dead at his feet, as innocent of evil intent as anyone could be.

A little later the tribe took the matter up and following the Old Testament rule of "an eye for an eye", decided to demand of his friends the surrender of the murderer that he might be put to death. Accordingly the old men of the tribe came to the leading men of the emigrant train and made known their decision, and there seemed nothing else to do but surrender the rash youth whose heart-broken father could do nothing but bemoan the fate which he well knew would promptly overtake his son.

About the first of June, 1849, my father left Fort Kearney and with his companions plunged deeper into the wilderness. As before said, the letter written from this place was destined to be the last one he was to write to his family. We learned later that he wrote others but these failed to reach their destination. However, from time to time we heard from him indirectly through letters written by members of his party.

One evening in the following December two of my uncles came to our house with countenances that betrayed the sad errand that had brought them. It turned out that they had just received a letter from a comrade of my father, saying that ten weeks before he had died from an attack of disease not long after reaching Sacramento City. Such was the fate of one forty-niner—reached the Land of Promise only to find there his grave. The companion of my father, who was near his own age, a man by the name of Gillispie, reached the gold-fields in safety, went to mining, and at the end of two years was two thousand dollars ahead. With this in his possession he took a ship at San Francisco and started home by way of Panama. But unfortunately he was stricken with an acute attack of disease from which he died and was buried at sea. His earnings, fortunately for all concerned, in due time reached his family in safety. The two young men of my father's immediate party returned home at the end of two or three years, with nothing to their credit but experience. One young man who went from our community, after two years spent in California returned with four thousand dollars in gold. This in that day, and in that neighborhood, was looked upon as an almost fabulous sum.

California gold made a great increase in the money

circulation of the country and the result was a real boom in business and a more than doubling in the price of all commodities. A second result of California gold was a great improvement in the manner and condition of living among the people generally.

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Stage Coach, Stage Driver, Stage Stand, and an Original Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde.

Go call a coach, and let a coach be called,
And let the man who calleth be a caller.

—*Henry Carey.*

Whoe'er excels in what we prize,
Appears a hero in our eyes.

—*Swift.*

In the late forties and early fifties, the stage coach reached its most prosperous era. Long experience had enabled its managers to develop a capacity for overcoming obstacles, and to a degree meeting the wants of the traveling public. The coaches were made of the best material obtainable. Moreover, the wheels, tongue, axles and doubletrees, while strong and durable, were not awkward and clumsy in appearance. The body, large enough to accommodate eight or ten passengers inside, instead of resting on iron springs, was suspended on heavy leather straps. At the rear end was the boot for carrying trunks which were protected from the weather by a strong, heavy, leather curtain, securely buckled to the sides of the coach. In front was the driver's seat with space at his feet for the main pouch and travelers' handbags. A kind of bannister of iron rods surrounded the top of the coach where extra baggage and passengers were carried. Beside the driver was an extra seat always in demand in fine weather.

The stage driver was a unique character. He was

always trustworthy and in his way manly. The stage lines carried the United States mail, and it was the business of the stage driver to get this and the passengers through to their destination; and this he sometimes had to do in the face of many difficulties. In certain seasons the roads were little else than a slough of mud and in this the coach sometimes mired down.

Then perhaps there would come a time when the ground was partially frozen, when both horses and coach would one moment be on a crust of ice and the next in a mire of mud. Sometimes the tongue would break and one had to be extemporized from a fence rail and rope, or straps. Sometimes a wheel would break down, and again a convenient fence rail would be utilized by fastening one end of it on the forward axle, resting the rear axle on its middle, and leaving its other end to drag on the ground. Under these circumstances the jaded horses literally *dragged* the coach to the next stage stand, where it was turned over to the blacksmith and wagon maker who in those days were experts in their callings. Meanwhile an extra coach, if one was available, if not a vehicle of some kind, was temporarily pressed into service and the mail and passengers hauled to the next stage stand.

One of the delights of my childhood was to watch an incoming stage coach. Upon approaching the village the driver always managed to put his horses on their mettle and as a result they would be in a fast trot and champing their bits. Meanwhile the body of the coach, suspended on leather straps, swayed to and fro in graceful curves. As soon as the coach came to a standstill, stable boys took out the horses and put fresh, well-groomed ones in their places. Meanwhile the mail pouch

Stage-Coach,
(A. C. McClurg and Co., by permission)

Franklin House, Greenville, Ill.—a Stage-Stand in the 50's. Lincoln was once entertained here.

was taken to the postoffice where it was opened, its contents emptied out and sorted over. After taking out letters and papers intended for that locality, the remainder, with mail matter dropped in the office, was returned to the mail sack which was locked and returned to the care of the stage driver. Putting the mail pouch through this process was called "changing the mail". When all was ready, the passengers in their seats, the trunks in the boot, extra baggage and passengers on top, the driver mounted his seat, as proudly as ever a king mounted his throne. There with four lines in one hand and his long whip in the other, he could "touch up" the leaders, give a "cluck" and sharp "git-up" to the wheel horses, when all would start off at a lively trot. Again the body of the coach would sway gracefully, again the small boy would be delighted and vow that when he grew to manhood he would be a stage driver.

As stated before, whatever else the stage driver might or might not be, he was always trustworthy. In those days banks were few and far between, and our present methods of exchange were very little in vogue; consequently the stage driver was not unfrequently entrusted with large sums of money and he never betrayed his trust. Though he was almost never a total abstainer, on duty he drank little or nothing. He was always full of good stories, always chewed tobacco and in expectorating could hit the head of a ten-penny nail eight feet away. Moreover, if the occasion seemed to justify it, he could "swear by note". About every ten miles along the stage route there was what was known as a stage stand, where there was a tavern and a large stable for housing and caring for the stage horses. These taverns were usually two-story buildings with a long porch running the whole

length of the structure. On a post about eight feet high, between the porch and the road, was a frame, about three feet long and two feet wide, in which swung a large thick board upon which, in big letters, was the name of the tavern with sometimes the additional words, "Entertainment for Man and Beast". The first name of our village was Amity, consequently the tavern had on its sign in front, "Amity Hotel". Some wag read it, A-mity Hot-el—"A Mighty Hot Hell!", and soon these words were in the mouth of every one. Whether from this cause, or from some other, the village was given, and yet bears, the name of the famous Indian maiden, Pocahontas.

But this village tavern, despite its unseemly nickname, deserves more than a passing notice. It was a two-story structure with a wide porch running the whole length of its front; through its center was a hall that led into a large dining-room; and upon one side of the hall was a lady's parlor and on the other the office, usually referred to as the bar-room; but why bar-room, no one could tell, for not a drop of intoxicating drink was sold about the premises, and for that matter not even in the village; furthermore the landlord was a total abstainer. A stairway in the hall led to a number of sleeping rooms up stairs.

The food furnished was substantial and not unappetizing, but from lack of modern methods of preserving meats and fruits the bill of fare at certain seasons lacked variety and at times came dangerously near to "hog and hominy". But whatever the table lacked in off-seasons was more than compensated for in late summer time, when it was literally loaded with things supposed to be good for the inner man.

But O, the flies! Flies everywhere! Flies *on* everything! Flies *in* everything! But little wonder, for at no great distance from the kitchen door was a big manure pile—an ideal incubator for hatching these household pests. And what more natural that the flies there generated should go straight to the kitchen and dining-room, neither of which were screened for the good reason that the genius who later devised that great boon for the housewife, the fly screen,* had as yet not had his inspiration.

About three feet above the dining-room table and extending its whole length was a strong cord to which was attached strips of paper that reached nearly down to the dishes. At mealtime it became the duty of someone to manipulate this cord in such a way that the papers hanging below it were set in motion and the flies for the time being kept from alighting on the food.

In private homes as mealtime approached someone went to a bush or tree and broke off a small branch well supplied with leaves, and with this industriously plied, the flies, with more or less success, would be kept from the table. Instead of a branch from a tree people in better circumstances used a brush made of ostrich feathers.

Strange as it now seems, flies in the fifties were regarded as scavengers and hence their coming in untold numbers was welcomed. On the advent of summer I more than once heard the wise ones predict that we were destined to have a sickly season for the reason that there were so few flies! How things change! The supposedly innocent housefly of two generations ago has

*Fly screens came in general use in the later 60's.

been renamed the typhoid fly, and rightly. Rightly because this old-time "scavenger" of the old days, not only carries typhoid germs, but those of tuberculosis, of diphtheria, and many other virulent diseases as well.

In my childhood the tavern and stage stand comprised the real "hub" of the village. Here four times every day the stage, the fastest conveyance of its day, would stop, well-dressed strangers would alight to stretch their legs, if not to get meals at the tavern, alert stable boys would care for the horses, the always picturesque stage driver would bite off an immense chew of "terbaccer" and maybe put a new cracker on his whip. Meanwhile the landlord had come out and was proceeding to make himself agreeable. Usually with a clean shaven face and the appearance of being well kept, he was all politeness and had a kindly word for all.

One day late in 1851 a stranger got off the stage coach and looked about the village. He was well dressed, gentlemanly in manner and entertaining in conversation. Later it began to be noised about that he had money and thought of locating in the community. After a time both of these rumors proved to be true; for with ready money he purchased a farm that adjoined the village. The only dwelling on this property was an old and long-used log house, but the stranger, a Mr. Lane, made a good impression and every one had a good word for him and a kind wish for his good wife, daughter and three boys. It was not long till he showed himself to be a man of affairs. He was energetic, progressive and disposed to do things. He bought additional land and, in due time, put this in a high state of cultivation. Later he became proprietor of the busiest store in the community, erected an up-to-date dwelling and moved into

it. Meanwhile he had become prominent in the community and foremost in every good work. He gave evidence of being sympathetic and free-hearted and seemed ready to open his pocketbook when occasion required. Mr. Lane, not very long after coming in the community, was elected Sunday School superintendent on the theory, as his sponsor put it, that "a new broom sweeps clean", and this place he filled so well that he seemed to have been made for it.

Every Sunday he went to church and sat with his wife and children. This was an innovation, for, as elsewhere stated, the men sat on one side of the church and the women on the other. In every way Mr. Lane seemed to be a model citizen and as such, a real accession to the community. By and by unpleasant rumors began to be whispered—rumors that gave rise to the query: Could there be a rift in the lute? a fly in the ointment? Mr. Lane was conceded by all to be a very energetic, busy man and it was known that he had to go to certain large cities to purchase goods; but it had been remarked that these visits seemed unnecessarily frequent. Dame Rumor was so inconsiderate as to assert that most of these trips to large cities were made for the purpose of getting out of sight and indulging in a drunken spree. But in any event he always returned towards the end of the week and on the following Sabbath, in immaculate dress, he would be at church with his family, and apparently no one followed the sermon closer than he. No one questioned the fact that Mr. Lane was a model husband and father and in his home he regularly conducted family worship.

Some years later I reached young manhood, was a

soldier in the Union army,* and procured a furlough, at New Orleans took a steamboat to come up the river; and upon entering the cabin the first man I saw was my old Sunday School superintendent, Mr. Lane, drunk! Yes, silly drunk. Thus had the mighty fallen! Thus was broken one of the idols of my childhood. When it first came out, I read with much interest Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde", and at once realized that our own Mr. Lane had lived this double life before the noted author was born. However, in that period our village afforded exceptional opportunities for living this dual life. It was fifteen miles from the nearest railway, it had no telegraph and most of our villagers were disposed to attend to their own affairs.

As a medical man of considerable experience, I now know that Mr. Lane was what is known as a "periodic", who at certain times would be stricken with a desire for drink that had to be satisfied. At such times he would have a hired man hitch up the fastest horse to a buggy and drive him rapidly to the railway station; arrived there he would board a train for St. Louis, where he could drink his fill. From there he would perhaps go to first one and another large city and remain till his debauch was ended. Then he would return to his hotel, wash, shave, take a bath, put on his best clothes and in due time return home, seemingly none the worse for his experience. Arrived home he would again take up the threads of every-day life and apparently throw renewed energy in his business.

The fifties had scarce reached their middle when the swaying stage coaches, the faithful stage horses, and the

*See Muskets and Medicine by the author.

always interesting stage driver, were all ordered to a new stage line in Iowa! Why? Because in Illinois a newly built steam railway had paralleled the stage line and it could no longer be run with profit.

Not long ago I visited the location of the village stage stand, the spot that in my childhood was the "hub" of the community, and I was unable to find so much as a stone or brick of what contributed to the make-up of the tavern and stage stables. Indeed, all I saw was a solitary bush. I thought of the following lines from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village":

> "Near yonder thorn that lifts its head on high,
> Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
> Low lies that house . . . . .
>
> Where gray-haired Mirth and smiling Toil retired,
> Where village statesmen talked with looks profound
> And news much older than their ale (?) went round;
> Imagination fondly stoops to trace
> The parlor splendors of that festive place,—
> The whitewashed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
> The varnished clock that ticked behind the door;
> The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
> Within aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay."

## CHAPTER V.

### A Country Store in the Fifties.

Gum, gall and groceries; ginger and gin;
Tar, tallow, tumeric, turpentine and tin.
—*Selected.*

But in the way of bargain, mark ye me
I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair.
—*Shakespeare.*

James Hike was a leading and popular citizen of the village. He was agreeable, approachable, and by some of his friends familiarly called Jim, by others Hike. In consequence of James Hike's popularity, together with the additional fact that he was postmaster, his place of business became the popular resort of the village. In warm weather the porch that ran the whole length of his store front was a favorite gathering-place for the men and boys of the village. Two or three old wooden chairs, some empty boxes and two boards along the store-front, served as seats. Here in small knots, in warm bright days, and in larger number of warm rainy days, the villagers, and the villagers reinforced from the farms, gathered and discussed various topics, told stories and gossiped about their neighbors. The crops, the weather, present and prospective, the roads, the latest arrival in the village, the new circuit rider, letters from friends in California, were only some of the things talked about. Old, white-haired men, rich in experiences, down to bare-footed, tow-headed boys, who had eyes and ears for all that was to be seen and heard,

made up the gathering on Hike's porch. Almost every adult had either a pipe in his mouth or a knife in his hand, and some were supplied with both. The pipes seemed to have the quality of loosening tongues, and the knives fixed the attention and quickened the sense of hearing.

Possibly the two last-named effects were due to the fact that those who held the knives had their nerves steadied by cutting and whittling—cutting letters, names and rude figures of men or animals upon the boxes, boards or wooden chairs upon which they were seated. Others were just as intently whittling away upon pine sticks, pieces of box lids that they were trimming into various shapes, but generally into sharp points or rounded extremities. With the talkers it was puff, puff, with the listeners it was cut, cut, whittle, whittle.

There was one frequenter of Hike's porch who was greatly given to exaggeration. Indeed, extravagance in the receipt of impressions and exaggeration in the statement of fact seemed to be constitutional with Jack Jawgood, for such was the man's name. His ear drums must have been geared with multipliers and his retinae supplied with magnifiers, so sure was he to hear and see things in a much bigger way than common people. Jack Jawgood was garrulous and unless some more interesting talker was present, was sure to command listeners. Jawgood was tall, lean, lank, had big brown eyes and a hooked nose. He nearly always wore a hunting shirt, brown jeans trousers that were generally too short, and an old black wool hat devoid of band and without shape in rim. In hot weather he often went barefooted and in winter wore brogan shoes and coarse, white, woolen socks the tops of which barely reached

the bottom of his trousers when he was standing. But when seated a considerable gap was left between trousers and socks, which exposed to view a hairy patch of shin. Jack was ever on the alert for the latest bit of neighborhood news. An accident of any kind, a runaway, a fight, a broken arm, a sudden fit of sickness or a moral lapse anywhere in the community was a newsy tidbit to the morbid makeup of Jack Jawgood. Stocked with one or more items of the kind, he straightway went to Hike's porch and, with no end of magnifying, proceeded to recount what he had heard or seen. His account was always interlarded with such expressions as "sure as I am alive he said" so and so; "I wish I may die if I didn't see". Jawgood seemed to snatch up bits of news much as a cow would blades of grass. Like the cow, too, later chewing her cud, he, at Hike's porch in his long drawn out narrations, chewed over and over his collected news items with much exaggeration and extreme satisfaction. The villagers all knew Jack Jawgood and his love of exaggerated narration. Hence he was not unfrequently greeted with such inquiries as: 'Hey, Jack! What do you know today?" Or, "Jack, what is your latest?" These questions were generally accompanied with a wink or knowing look at some bystander. Jawgood had an imperturbable countenance, and if these inquiries ever disturbed him no one was the wiser. Indeed, it is more than probable they flattered him. Jack had no rival; in fact he monopolized the field. The village had no newspaper. But times have changed. The modern village newspaper has driven more than one Jack Jawgood out of business.

In cold weather the porch was deserted and the inside of Hike's store, about its warm stove, became a fa-

vorite gathering place. But the winter circle was smaller, more select and altogether less democratic than the hot-weather porch gathering. Old age and inexperienced youth were much less in evidence. Here of evenings gathered among others the two or three village pettifoggers, the school teacher, the blacksmith, the shoemaker, one or more of the school directors and at times the circuit rider. The circle was eminently respectable and while there was no formal organization, yet it was to all intents and purposes a real village club, where were discussed the latest news, crops, business, prices, politics, etc. Each one in attendance found his wits sharpened, his hunger for social intercourse satisfied and often realized that his fund of general information had increased.

All the goods in Hike's store were hauled by wagon from St. Louis, forty miles to the west; and in exchange for these the proprietor received all kinds of country produce, such as eggs, butter, lard, bacon, wool, hides and indeed almost any of the smaller farm products.

The money of that time fell under two general classes, namely "hard" and "paper". Hard money comprised all coins of gold, silver and copper. For the most part gold was coined into twenty, ten and five-dollar pieces, though occasionally a one-dollar gold coin was found in circulation.

Silver was coined into pieces of one dollar, fifty cents, twenty-five cents, ten cents and five cents in value. Early in the fifties two or three other silver pieces were in circulation, picayune and "bits". A picayune had the value of six and one-fourth cents, and a bit twice that, or twelve and one-half cents. As a bit was just half the value of twenty-five cents, the latter coin was nearly

always called two bits; likewise fifty cents was called four bits.

Copper then, as now, was coined into one-cent pieces, and occasionally two-cent coppers were seen. However, coppers were little used except in making change for postage stamps. Goods were never priced less than five cents. For illustration, when the merchant was marking his goods the last figure was always a 5 or an 0; 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 never appeared in such place. The result was cent-pieces were seldom needed in making change in the stores.

By far the greatest variety in the money of that time occurred in the paper circulation. The local banks all issued paper money in amounts to suit themselves and the result was a great deal of it was of questionable value; then the bills were easily counterfeited. Many of the moneyed institutions were so unreliable that they were known as "wild-cat" banks. Banks of this character were constantly failing and meantime the counterfeiter was busy striving to duplicate the issue of responsible firms. To keep business men in touch with all this, what was known as a "Counterfeit Detector" was issued regularly. This was a folder about the size of an old-fashioned Almanac and was expected to give the up-to-date status of every banking institution within a given locality. Every progressive business man was a subscriber to a "Counterfeit Detector" and when a customer presented a paper bill that he was not familiar with he at once referred to what was his oracle in currency matters. Sometimes the customer was told his bill was counterfeit and of course worthless; at other times he would be informed that the bank which had issued another bill had failed but was paying a certain amount

on the dollar and this amount would be allowed the customer. What the merchant said "always went", as the slang has it, and the customer always abided by his decision.

In addition to keeping a general store, James Hike, as before noted, was the village postmaster and faithfully *changed* the mail when the stage coach came in. In the late forties and early fifties envelopes had not yet come in use and consequently the sheet of foolscap upon which the letter was written was folded, addressed and sealed with sealing wax, a stick of which was always kept at hand for this purpose. At this period letters were always dropped in the postoffice and sent to the one addressed who paid the postage due, and this was never less than five cents, and from that on up, in proportion to distance. From what has been said it will be seen that postage stamps had not yet come in use. Postage stamps, much as we have them today, came in use in the mid-fifties, however.

"James Hike—Dry Goods" stood for a general store in which was on sale everything from a darning needle up to a barrel of flour. Upon shelves at one side of the store were dress goods, woolens, shirting, drilling, bonnets and other articles of millinery. On shelves at the other side were hats, caps, boots, shoes, underwear, and other things similar. Upon tables in the middle of the room were overcoats, overalls, coats, trousers, and other articles of men's apparel. At the back of the store was a counter whereon everything in the line of groceries was weighed out. So full was the store that wherever on counter, shelf or even floor, a bit of space could be found it was occupied by such articles as tubs, buckets,

tinware, saddles, harness, chains, rope, spades, forks and a miscellany of other things.

In the shed-room adjoining, plows, harrows, ox-yokes, barrels of flour, salt, molasses and, as before named, whisky were on sale. Alongside of the molasses barrel was the whisky barrel. Both were drawn from alike and as little was thought of filling the whisky jug as of filling the molasses jug. Such a thing as selling beer and whisky over the counter by the drink was unheard of. Respectable people had whisky in their houses, for the most part for medicinal purposes solely. Of course others took advantage of its free and open sale to get it for a beverage. But for whatsoever purpose whisky was bought, its open sale was in no sense regarded as a reflection on the proprietor of the store, James Hike. Indeed, Hike's store was the pride of the village and every resident believed every man's needs could be satisfied there.

One such resident was Joe Dobbins, a cattle buyer and horse trader. Coming in from a trading tour one day on the stage coach, Dobbins found himself in company with an acquaintance, Pete Stover, who, like himself, was a stock dealer. Stover lived in another county and in the course of the conversation Hike's store came up for consideration. "Tell what 'tis, Pete, Jim Hike keeps mighty nigh ev-ry thing in his store."

"Mighty nigh ev'ry thing's sayin' a good deal; guess you don't mean it all, Joe."

"I don't hey? You cain't name nuthin Jim Hike hain't got!" said the bantering Joe Dobbins.

"Cain't I, though? How about balloons? Course I mean big balloons that'll take a feller up and tote him off."

"Now, Pete Stover, s'pose you tote fair and name somethin' a man in my county and your'n 's like to need."

"You mean what a common farmin' kind of a feller'd need 'bout his house and place, Joe?"

"Now you're gittin' round, Pete, kaze that's jist what I mean."

"Tell you what I'll do, Joe; I'll name somethin' that jist the commonest kind of a feller might ask for and I'll go you a ten-dollar 'shiner' your man what's-his-name haint got it."

"Nuff said! Here's my money, where's your'n," was the prompt reply of Joe Dobbins as he put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a ten-dollar gold piece that he held up in plain view.

"O I'll match you. Who'll hold the stakes?" Just as promptly answered Pete Stover, likewise pulling a ten-dollar gold piece from his pocket, and adding: "Why, Bill Hicks that's drivin' this gocart. Say Bill, me 'n Pete here's made a bet; you're to hold stakes. I got ten dollars 'at says Pete cain't ask Jim Hike fur nuthin' a common feller 'd want that Jim haint got in his store. And Pete's got a yallar boy 'at's tryin' to say Pete kin. Them's the terms. But the conditions is: If Hike's clean empty and caint come down with what Pete wants then Pete gits my ten. But if Jim's loaded and trots out what Pete calls fur then I git all 'at's in your hands."

In due time the village was reached, and the three men, most interested, went to Hike's store, and just before crossing its threshold Joe Dobbins took occasion to say to Pete Stover: "Name your article!"

"Goose-yokes," promptly answered Pete.

Joe's countenance fell, and is it any wonder? What

merchant would have goose-yokes in stock? But resolving to make the most of what seemed a desperate situation, Joe Dobbins put on a bold front and entering the store with his two companions called out in as firm a voice as he could command:

"Say, Jim, got any goose-yokes?"

The merchant thought a minute and answered, "Yes, I believe I have; in fact, come to think, I know there's some in the loft. How many do you want?"

Joe Dobbins's face brightened up under a broad smile as he said:

"Shaw, Jim! You haint got no goose-yokes, nuther!"

"Yes, I have got goose-yokes," said the merchant, "and now I mind how I come by them. Jake Bunch, up in the Forks, had a lot of geese that kept crawling through his neighbor's fences and pestering them shamefully. Now Jake's wife wanted to keep the geese, but Jake didn't like to harm anybody. Somewhere he heard of goose-yokes and one day came in and asked me to get him a lot. So I sent for them. They were a long time getting here, but at last they came. One day after they'd come Jake Bunch was in and I told him his goose-yokes were here. 'I'm sorry,' said Jake, 'cause the geese are all dead with poisen that we think somebody must have fed them on, but we are saying nothing. Of course I don't need the goose-yokes, but I'll pay you for them.' Bunch was a good customer and so I kept the goose-yokes and let him keep his money, and here's my chance to sell that lot of goose-yokes and yours to get them, but I did not know you kept geese, Joe."

"I don't and, comin' to the pint, I don't want your goose-yokes, Jim. I jist wanted to know that yu'd got

'um. Fact is, I got ten dollars dependin' on your havin' 'um. Haint I, Bill Hicks?"

"Guess you're right," said the stage-driver, "and if your friend don't put up any objections I'll jist hand you over the stakes."

As by this time the clerk appeared with an armfull of goose-yokes, Pete Stover was in no position to make any objection to what the stakeholder had said. So the money was put in the hands of the exultant Dobbins, and meantime Hicks and Stover passed out of the store door. They were hardly out of sight when Dobbins related to the storekeeper all the details of the wager, closing with the words:

"Tell you what 'tis, Jim; no durned furriner's goin' to run down Jim Hike's store while I'm round and long's I got a dollar in my pocket what kin talk."

## CHAPTER VI.

### Churches, Church People and Preachers in the Fifties.

> And fools came to scoff and remained to pray.
> —*Goldsmith.*
> Who builds a church to God and not to fame,
> Will never mark the marble with his name.
> —*Pope.*

At this period there were comparatively few church buildings really worthy of the name. True there was here and there a "meeting-house", a barn-like structure, with architectural arrangements as unattractive as too often were the doctrines expounded from its pulpit. Many rural communities, however, did not even have these uninviting places of worship and, under these circumstances, the always hospitable school-house opened its doors. Here it may be proper to say that most of the religious people of that era were affiliated with the Methodists—a denomination that always did, and always would, hold meetings *somewhere*. If a church was not available, then a schoolhouse would be utilized, provided one could be had. In the event this, for any reason, was impracticable, the preacher would hold his meeting in a private house, or if this was too small, in a grove, and in case it rained, a barn would be utilized. Someway, somehow, somewhere, the zealous circuit rider of two generations ago managed to carry the gospel of the Lowly Nazarene to practically

An Up-To-Date Church in the Mid-Fifties. M. E. Church erected in Pocahontas, Ill., in 1854.
(Courtesy of Dr. D. R. Wilkins, Pocahontas)

all the people. Attendance upon religious services was always referred to as going to "meeting", instead of going to church.

About the middle of the fifties, the good people of my village very wisely decided that they had been long enough without a suitable place of worship. Accordingly, in a very practical spirit, they put their hands in their pockets and took out the price of what, in that day, was an up-to-date church. Every stick of lumber in this was white-pine, a building material that the recently-constructed steam railways had made available. This lumber was hauled by wagon from a station on the Ohio and Mississippi Railway (now the B. and O.) fifteen miles from our village. When this church of white-pine was finished and given two coats of immaculate white paint, it straightway became the pride of the village, and although universally regarded as up-to-date in every particular, its arrangement was simple in the extreme. In front was a platform of boards from which two doors opened into the church. Through the south door passed the men, who took seats in the two south rows of pews. Through the north door the women had access to two rows of seats on the north side of the church. In the farther end was an enclosed, white-pine pulpit, approached on either side by a short flight of steps. At the right and left of the pulpit, and parallel with it, were several rows of pews which the ungodly had profanely named the "amen-seats". This name had undoubtedly originated in the fact that the more faithful among the members always found seats in these pews and when the minister made some striking point they were in the habit of "speakin' out in meetin'" and in no uncertain tones saying,

"Amen, Amen!" In the sides of the building were the usual rows of high, narrow windows. In the front end and between the doors was a large box stove with a pipe that ran to the ceiling, where it turned and followed this to the farther end of the building, and there, immediately over the pulpit, it entered a chimney in the wall.

The church was lighted by candles placed in holders along the walls and in rude chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

Not very long after this church was built a preacher of mature years was sent to the congregation who was in the habit of using tobacco and expectorating rather promiscuously. In this particular he did not even respect the sacred precincts of his pulpit. Things went on in this way for a time, till finally some of the young men and women of the church decided to have a general cleaning-up. Accordingly one fine day broom, dust-rag and scrubbing brush were applied thoroughly and vigorously. No corner, no crevice in the building, or in the pulpit, was neglected. When all was finished a small, strong box was filled with clean sand and attached to one of its sides was a placard bearing in large letters the words "Spit Here".

Many of the ministers preached a fiery gospel and had no little to say about the "unquenchable fire" into which, after death, presumably all unrepentant sinners would be cast. In this connection I will refer to the case of a man in another neighborhood who in a sort of holy horror was referred to as an avowed Universalist and consequently was thought to be little short of cloven-footed.

Four times every year came the Quarterly meeting,

which all looked forward to with pleasurable anticipation. To these Quarterly meetings always came the Presiding Elder, who in most instances was a relatively able preacher. One of these by the name of Mitchell I yet recall with pleasure. In contrast to many others, he was fond of presenting the more attractive side of religion. Nothing appeared to please him so much as in well chosen words to depict the delights and joys of Heaven, to which he seemed to take it as a matter of course we were all going. In this state of mind his eyes would beam, his face would light up with radiant smiles while the musical tones of his welcome words fell upon delighted listeners—delighted because his hearers could but compare his attractive words, the winning expression of his features and his kindly manner with the harsh tones, repulsive contortions and fierce pulpit-poundings of too many preachers of that day as they portrayed the literal hell into which they seemed to think the majority of mankind were destined to sink.

Every winter there was a Protracted Meeting at which it was hoped all the church members would get new zeal and all the non-church members would "get religion". For this last purpose a "mourners' bench" was provided. This was a long seat without a back, placed in front of the pulpit and at which all kneeled who wanted to get religion.

To this mourners' bench came not a few hardened sinners who certainly needed some kind of reformation in their lives. To it also came youths whose greatest transgression was, perhaps, some mischievous prank played upon a schoolmate. To it also came young misses who, so far from being sinners, were the very

embodiment of innocence in their every-day lives. But the hard theology of the day taught these innocent young people that they must seek, must implore, nay must "agonize", till their many sins were forgiven and they could "flee from the wrath to come".

In the community were certain characters who, for the want of a better name, might be termed religious *rounders.* These individuals would get religion at every protracted meeting and in a few weeks somehow manage to get rid of it. One of these religious rounders was an ox-driver, a six-footer with a loud, stentorian voice. When this man was so fortunate as once more to get religion he would work himself into a sort of ecstatic state and shout so loud and so long, that the dead would almost awaken. He not unfrequently lead in prayer, and as he always used substantially the same words, some of us youngsters could not help "learning by heart" his oft-repeated supplication. Notwithstanding the numerous times this man fell from grace, after each regeneration, in a voice that could be heard a mile away, he would go about his work singing that old hymn:

"I'll never turn back any more,
Any more, any more, I'll never turn back, I'll never turn back."

Such a thing as church music, as we understand it today, was unknown in the period of which I write. Indeed, by many, anything besides the human voice, raised in songful worship, was deemed sacreligious. Hymn books were few and none were in the pews, consequently the preacher would "line the hymn" that the congregation might sing it. Is some reader of a younger

generation curious to know what the preacher really did when he "lined" a hymn? He simply read two lines, then paused till these were sung by the congregation, then read two more, waited till these were sung, and so on till the end was reached.

Lining a hymn was perhaps a relic of the days when there were no hymn books and none was really needed because the people, for the most part, could not read. In due time the people began to provide themselves with hymn books and for some time after this provision the preacher when announcing the hymn would say: "Please sing without lining".

But whatever else may have been said of these church members they were liberal and accommodating in allowing ministers of other denominations to occupy their pulpit. True, the regular preacher had several other appointments that he had to fill and in consequence he could use the pulpit of his village church but once in two weeks.

One pleasant memory deeply impressed on my mind in connection with the outside use of this pulpit was when a Lutheran minister from another town preached and brought with him an orchestra which furnished the music in delightful strains that thrilled us youngsters.

At odd times this pulpit was occupied by a minister of different type from any of those above described. This man, in the prime of a superb manhood, was six feet in height, finely proportioned and had handsome features. His sermons were thoughtful and scholarly and delivered in the silvery tones of a fine voice. He was a good singer, always led in this part of the worship, and it was a real treat to hear his voice as it

rounded out in the full, rich tones to the music of some fine old tune, such as Balerma, Boylston, Duke Street, Siloam, and others.

This man was always something of a mystery to me. All conceded him to be an able pulpit man indeed, one far above the average. Moreover, he was universally esteemed and liked. Those who knew him best, and were best qualified to judge, could but wonder why he was not filling a high salaried pulpit in some large city. As it was he lived on a rather poor farm and preached wherever, and whenever, opportunity offered. I have since learned that he was a Presbyterian missionary and conscientiously believed the field he was working in afforded him ample opportunities to do good, and unquestionably he did it.

Another type was a Baptist minister who frequently occupied the pulpit on off Sundays. His sermons were thoughtful and carefully written out. These he delivered, or rather read, in a conversational tone and never raised his eyes from his manuscript. This man's manner and methods were in striking contrast to the vigorous delivery and ringing words of practically all the preachers of the day.

The Sabbath School at this church was non-denominational and was known as a Union Sunday School. It had a little library of books published by the American Union Sunday School Publishing Association of Philadelphia; and while some of these were of the sickly kind where the willful boy always goes to the everlasting bow-wows and the goody-goody boy always meets with success and grows up to be governor of his State, yet for the most part, the books were well selected and were interesting, and helpful to young people. This

"Visit to the Hive", Frontispiece in "The Hive and its Wonders", a small volume published by the American Sunday School Union in 1851.

publishing house also printed a little paper, and I shall always remember the picture at the top of its first page—a neat little church with a graceful spire and a comely woman leading a little boy with one hand and a little girl with the other, all evidently going to Sabbath School. This Union Sunday School certainly filled what would otherwise have been a hiatus in the lives of the young people of the village, and I take pleasure in acknowledging my obligations to it.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Sports, Amusements and Some Other Things.

Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please!
* * * * * * * *
How often have I blessed the coming day,
When toil remitting, lent its turn to play.

—*Goldsmith.*

I had rather have a fool to make me merry,
Than experience to make me sad.

—*Shakespeare.*

Amusements were few and simple and foremost among these, for the men folks, was hunting, for there was yet much small game in the country. In quest of this, half-grown boys, not a few young men, and certain grown-ups, who had the hunting instinct ingrained in their natures, found much satisfaction.

My native village of Pocahontas was in the edge of the timber. To the west Looking-Glass prairie extended far as the eye could reach; to the east was the "forest primeval" that lay on either side of Shoal Creek. On the prairie were great numbers of prairie chickens. In the timber were many squirrels, a few wild turkeys and in the early fifties, at certain times, the branches of the trees would bend and sometimes even break under the weight of thousands of wild pigeons. Rabbits and quail, usually called "partridges", could be found in plenty, both in the prairie and timber.

A few deer were left and there was an occasional

old hunter who kept deer hounds. One of these hunters I shall never forget, Old Billy Reems, as he was familiarly called. He was famous for the great amount of larger game that current report credited him with having slain. I shall never forget a village scene in which Old Billy was the central figure. The scene was staged one Saturday afternoon in October, when a few farmers, on one errand and another, had come in from their homes—this one for his mail, that one for some needed supplies, the other to fulfill an engagement, and all, to meet and greet their neighbors and gather the latest community gossip. Presently the sound of a horn was heard and all ears and eyes became intent. In a little while Old Billy Reems was seen approaching on one of the timber roads. In a moment he had halted in front of the village store where most of the men were gathered. In front of him and across the withers of his horse was a deer. Across the pommel of the saddle was a Kentucky rifle, its butt held in the hunter's hand while in his other was the bridle rein. Under his left elbow suspended by a leather strap was a powderhorn and leather bulletpouch. Under his right elbow was an ox-horn whose reverberations put new life in the deer hounds, several of which soon gathered about their master. They were all yellow in color, slender in form and cadaverous looking in appearance. Their barking was deep toned and characteristic, so that the term "baying of the hounds" has come to be almost classical.

Dressed in his "hunting shirt", his trusty rifle and latest conquest in front of him, his accoutrements in proper place, the hounds at ease, Old Billy Reems,

proud as any conqueror, made a picture for the pen of a Cooper.

The older men still clung to the Kentucky squirrel rifle, some of which yet had flint locks, but the newer generation nearly all had shotguns, most of which were double-barreled. The stores all carried in stock powder, shot and percussion caps. Cartridges had not yet come in use, and in loading a charge of powder was first poured into the muzzle of the gun. On the powder a piece of paper was pressed down firmly by the butt end of the ram-rod, and on this was placed a charge of shot, held in place by a piece of newspaper pressed firmly down as before. Meantime, a few grains of powder found its way out through the tube where it came in contact with the contents of the percussion cap and all that was needed to discharge the gun, was the sharp stroke from the hammer of the gunlock.

Loading a rifle was not so easy as loading a shotgun for the reason that a patch had to be put round the bullet. To make the patch a strong piece of cotton cloth was "tallowed" on its under side and placed over the muzzle and upon this the bullet was laid and pressed down till even with the top of the gun-barrel. Then with a sharp knife the cloth was cut off, the bullet thus covered was pushed to the bottom of the gun-barrel where it rested on the charge of powder. The powder was poured into the palm of the hand and the amount needed was measured by the eye. However, for this purpose there came in vogue later a measure made of brass and about the size of one's little finger.

Sometimes there were shooting-matches, at which prizes of some kind would be awarded the best marksmen. And occasionally a gun contest of another char-

acter would occur: All those in the neighborhood desiring a day's hunt would divide into two equal parties and to each of these a certain specifically defined locality was assigned and in this the individuals named were to hunt, and no others. When night came, all were to report with the day's product at the village tavern. The final result was determined by a simple computation in addition. Let it be surmised that each bird or animal represented so many points—say a rabbit 5, a squirrel 10, a quail 20, a prairie chicken 50, a wild turkey 100, a deer 500, and so on through the list of game. Thus it can easily be seen that the side footing up the largest number of points would be declared the winner and would have to foot the bill for a dinner or supper, or pay some other forfeit.

Football and baseball, as played today, were unknown games. What was known as townball, however, was a popular sport. This was played with a yarn ball covered with leather, or a hollow, inflated rubber ball, both of which were soft and yielding and not likely to inflict injury as is so common today in baseball. Townball was much played in the schoolhouse yard during recess and at the noon hour.

Sometimes there was an exhibition by a traveling showman who, in a wagon or other vehicle, transported his curios and other attractions and appliances from village to village. I recall one of these who had two mummies which he advertised as an Egyptian King and Queen. So common as are electric batteries today it seems strange to recall that they were so rare two generations ago that showmen took them around and greatly pleased their audiences by permitting certain fortunate ones to "take shocks". In connection with

this exhibition the working of Morse's electric telegraph, then a recent invention, was explained. I remember one showman with long, heavy whiskers, and as almost every one shaved closely, his appearance was unique and attracted much attention, as he doubtless intended it should.

A source of no little social pleasure was the Ladies' Sewing Society, whose members met on certain specified afternoons at one of the neighbors', where they would get busy with their needles and tongues. The sewing machine had not yet come in use and consequently all sewing was done by hand. What the women of the local organization did was simple, and consisted for the most part in making underwear and men's working clothes. However, they marketed their product at a fair profit and the proceeds were devoted to sundry commendable things. Maybe the parsonage was in need of a new carpet or possibly some worthy, struggling widow was in need of a cookstove. About the middle of the fifties the organization put forth unusual efforts and made enough to purchase a small circulating library, a great need in the community. The women would sew till supper time, when husbands, brothers and fathers would come in and all sat down to an enjoyable evening meal. After supper two or three hours would be spent in social intercourse. Sometimes the organization would conduct a sort of newspaper managed by the Society's secretary, and to which any one was at liberty to contribute. At stated times the contributions were read aloud, and, as the name of the writer was in all cases withheld, they excited no little interest and curiosity.

At one of these gatherings at the home of a promi-

nent citizen the guests were seated one evening after supper, when all at once the host's only daughter came in on the arm of her lover and took a position in front of a minister who was present, and who in due time pronounced the couple man and wife. To the great majority of those assembled all this was as "lightning from a clear sky".

Sometimes all would join in singing some popular melody, such as "Blue Juniata", "Last Rose of Summer", "The Prairie Flower", "Nellie Gray", "Sweet Home", and "Lilly Dale". Not a few of these songs were sad. I recall four lines of "Lilly Dale":

"'Twas a calm, still night, and the moon's pale light
Shone soft o'er hill and dale,
When friends mute with grief stood around the death-bed
Of my poor lost Lilly Dale."

I recall the first two and last two lines of "Blue Juniata":

"Wild roved an Indian girl, bright Elpharata,
Where sweep the waters of the Blue Juniata.
* * * * * * *
Fleeting years have born away the voice of Elpharata;
Still sweep the waters of the Blue Juniata."

As elsewhere stated, there were practically no pianos or cottage organs in those days, but in the late fifties there was a young man who sometimes added the melodious tones of his flute to the music made by the voices of the singers.

Right or wrong, yet the fact remains that very many people went to church for diversion and entertainment. This was markedly true during protracted meetings.

On certain festive occasions the blacksmith's anvils were loaded with powder and when this was ignited a tremendous noise resulted. Sometimes the boys would bore holes in logs, put in powder, drive in a peg with a groove on one side, then fix a fuse and get away to a safe distance, while the powder ignited and burst the log open with an almost deafening sound.

At other times, after night youngsters would get turpentine, and soak in this balls of candle-wick, set these on fire and throw them from one to another. Under such circumstances turpentine burns with a slow flame that does not injure the hand, if held for a short while only.

In the early fifties charivaris ("chivarees") were in vogue and on more than one occasion the night all about would be made hideous with unearthly noise for the benefit of some young man and woman who had just taken a solemn vow to love and cherish each other. A popular noise producer at a charivari was the "Jerusalem Fiddle", which was made by removing the top from a large dry-goods box and rubbing rosin plentifully on the up-standing edges, across which the flat side of a long scantling, also well rosined, was drawn to and fro. The noise resulting was hideous and like nothing else outside of Bedlam.

House raisings, barn raisings and corn huskings all served to get the people together; and on such occasions there were nearly always bountiful dinners. One of these I attended when a boy. The table was spread under the trees in the yard, and was made by putting planks on trestles and covering these with tablecloths, some of which neighbors supplied. This extemporized table fairly "groaned beneath the load" of food put

upon it. Of the ample supply of good things to eat at such times and from which the good housewives of those days drew at appropriate seasons to spread the hospitable board for everybody, my boyhood recollections contain a list something like the following: Fresh beef, fresh pork, venison, prairie chicken, wild turkey, fried chicken, fried eggs, broiled ham, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips, snap beans, butter beans, onions, cabbage, roasting ears, egg bread, corn bread, wheat bread, biscuits, buckwheat cakes, fritters, stewed peaches, stewed apples, stewed tomatoes, stewed pumpkin, baked squash, quince preserves, plum preserves, pear preserves, apple pie, pumpkin pie, peach cobbler, cream pudding, maple syrup, honey, peaches, sweet cream, doughnuts, poundcake, sweet milk, buttermilk, clabber, sweet cider, coffee and tea.

One of the never-to-be-forgotten sights of the fifties was Donati's comet, which in the late summer and early autumn of 1858 filled nearly the whole of the northwest heavens. Much was written about the comet before it made its appearance and very naturally much was said about it after it came. Some believed it meant that the end of the world was near and others said it was a sign that we would soon have a bloody war. However, the great majority accepted the comet of 1858 as one of nature's wonders and one whose like they would never again be permitted to see. Gray-haired men and women of today still talk of the wonderful comet of their childhood that came about the time of the great Lincoln-Douglas debate.

In the early fifties a sort of epidemic of "spirit-rappings", "table-turnings" or "table-rappings", as it was severally called, swept over Illinois. Spirit-rap-

pings started in and near Rochester, New York, and from there extended over the entire land. When I was a small boy I was present on two or three occasions when older people would gather about a bare table, and after seating themselves all would lay their extended hands upon it. Then some one would gravely ask question after question which it was proposed the spirits should answer with a specified number of raps or knocks.

But the spirits invariably refused to answer any of the questions propounded, and not a rap or knock of any kind was heard. But notwithstanding this lack of spirit manifestation, for several years during the fifties certain people persisted in holding these meetings, usually at private houses.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### The Village Lyceum and Some Local Pettifoggers.

Leave these keen encounter of our wits,
And fall somewhat into a slower method.
—*Shakespeare.*

Your pettifoggers dam their souls,
To share with knaves in cheating fools.
—*Butler.*

Even though vanquished he could argue still.
—*Goldsmith.*

One of the institutions of the village was its Lyceum, the sessions of which occurred once a week, during cool weather, in the schoolhouse. Here heat was furnished from two wood-stoves and light from candles which were made to stand alone by putting the free end in melted tallow dropped from the burning end on the desk and allowed to harden.

Every man of good character was eligible to membership and many of the villagers enrolled their names. The officers consisted of a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Following were some of the topics discussed, or rather subjects debated: "Resolved, that African slavery should be abolished in the United States". "Resolved, that polygamy is a greater evil than African slavery". "Resolved, that the sale of alcoholic beverages should be prohibited". "Resolved, that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise is a menace to the perpetuity of the national union". "Resolved, that there is more satisfaction in pursuit than in pos-

session''. ''Resolved, that the discovery of California gold has proved more of a curse than a blessing to this country''. ''Resolved, that the right of suffrage should be granted to women''.

Some member would move that a certain subject be the one named for discussion at the next meeting, and upon the adoption of this motion, two polemics were appointed whose duty it was to select their assistants, and lead in the discussion. All the members would be chosen on one or the other side. However, no one was permitted to speak longer than ten minutes; but as a matter of fact, few speakers used up the time allowed, for, save the Methodist preacher and three or four pettifoggers, all were amateurs. When the evening came for the debate the polemics made the opening talks and were followed in turn by other speakers. Strict parliamentary rules were sought to be enforced.

These debates were always well attended, as it was interesting to see and hear the speakers. A certain wordy village pettifogger, not infrequently manifested a disposition to be arrogant and overbearing. The preacher, considerate and deferential, expressed his thoughts in well-chosen words and had the happy faculty of knowing when he was through. The principal of the village school, poetical in temperament and gifted in speech, nearly always spoke with great earnestness, especially if the subject under debate gave him opportunity to picture the horrors of slavery or the evils of the liquor traffic—two questions near his heart. The chief citizen of the village, a little pompous in bearing, always spoke in measured terms, seemingly impressed with the thought that his words carried unusual weight and authority. The village wit, with a grave, imper-

turbable countenance, labored under the handicap of having his most serious, carefully-worded thoughts interpreted as funny. The modest, timid youth, who was about to make his maiden speech, won the general sympathy when he arose and in a trembling voice said a few words, blushed, forgot most of what he had in mind, blushed a deeper red than ever, and sat down. There was also the man who was never disturbed, because he had more brass than brains, and who, with the utmost composure, would expose his ignorance by making blunder after blunder, and in the end, sacrifice everything but his equipoise. These Lyceum debates revealed the fact that there were full-fledged abolitionists resident in the village, and this at a time when the mere word was deemed a reproach, so great was the influence of the upholders of African slavery, even in the free state of Illinois. Furthermore, they showed that in the community were total abstainers who, if they could have had their way, would have poured in the Atlantic Ocean all the intoxicating beverages in existence.

One of the chief village functionaries was the squire, or justice of the peace, and his office was not infrequently the arena where the neighborhood pettifoggers fought their wordy battles. One of the last named was a very large, corpulent, round-faced man of few words, spoken in a heavy voice, who always seemed to think that his avoirdupois and solemnity would and should carry verdicts his way. That he was frequently disappointed, goes without saying.

The heavyweight had his antipode in another local pettifogger, a tall, lean, raw-boned man, with long legs and arms, a hooked nose, and angular features. He

was fluent in speech, vehement in manner and his words were not infrequently acrid and bitter.

A third pettifogger, who sometimes appeared in the justice's court, seemed in his youth to have been impressed with the idea that long hair was an unfailing mark of genius and consequently he allowed his uncertain-hued, tangled locks to grow till they nearly reached his shoulders, and this when short-cropped hair was the fashion. This man was anything but fluent. His words seemed to come with much labor and, as if to make up for this, he was in the habit of violently "shaking his mane" when speaking.

Another specimen of the neighborhood pettifogger class was absolutely unique. He was by far the homeliest man I ever saw. Indeed, he was more than homely; he was repulsively ugly. His eyes were very large and seemed to be half out of their sockets. His nose was abnormally small and his lower jaw protruded far beyond its fellow. The skin on his face was rough and mottled. In a word his countenance was hideous. His protruding eyeballs secured for him the nickname "Pop-Eye". It was said this man could not read a word, yet he was well informed, and in native wisdom and homely wit was almost a modern Esop.

I shall never forget one case in which this man figured. One of the village merchants found it necessary to sue for an unpaid bill a patron who was a relative of this unattractive pettifogger and who, very naturally, employed his kinsman in the defense. Associated with him was the lean, fluent pettifogger above described. The prosecution was put in the hands of a young man in the village, who had just completed his law studies, and who had to assist him an old, experienced lawyer

from the county seat. It so happened that the first name of both the pettifoggers was James, familiarly abbreviated to "Jim". A number of times during the trial, the old lawyer facetiously referred to the opposing counsel as a "pair of Jims"—and a "pair" they certainly were! But for this bit of sarcastic pleasantry at their expense, the pair were destined to get more than even. The merchant's claim was just, the whole course pursued by the defendant was reprehensible and his daughter on the witness stand undoubtedly perjured herself, though this may have been unwittingly. Yet it soon became apparent that the tide was against the prosecution, who, in a fit of desperation, put the young attorney (the chief prosecutor) on the witness stand where he testified that the young woman had sworn to a lie. As might have been predicted, this turned out to be a boomerang for the prosecution, and when one of the "pair of Jims", he of the big eyes and repulsive features, got up to speak, he literally impaled the young attorney; and in the course of his eloquent appeal said that history had repeated itself, that in his zeal Abraham (the old, experienced attorney) had *offered up the young man* (the youthful attorney). This application of a well-known scriptural incident was so apt and in point, that the jury found for the defendant, very much to the regret and disappointment of the merchant. That the old lawyer was chagrined and the young one deeply mortified hardly needs to be stated.

## CHAPTER IX.

### An Old-Time Water Mill.

I hear the clatter that jars its walls,
And the rushing water's sound,
And I see the black floats rise and fall
As the wheel goes slowly round.
—*Thomas Dunn English.*

In my boyhood days I was never happier than when seated astride a horse with a sack of wheat or shelled corn under me and the bridle rein in hand, I started on the road that led to the watermill on Shoal Creek, two miles distant from the village. This mill was owned by a man named Seaver and was of a type very common two generations ago—a gristmill and a sawmill under the same roof. Let us in imagination pay this old mill a visit, say on a June morning when all nature is alive and in the prime of its beauty.

The building is a crude structure with the main floor on a level with the bank of the creek, having in one end an up-and-down saw which is slowly eating its way through a log in an endeavor to transform it into lumber, and in the other end a pair of stones is with equal deliberation transforming shelled corn into meal. A dam across the creek makes a sufficient head of water to turn the wheels; one an undershot, horizontal wheel, with a crank on one end of its axle, communicates an up-and-down motion to the saw; the other, a rude prototype of the turbine, is at the lower end of an upright shaft and at the bottom of a deep, barrel-like frame of strong

Brown's Mill on Shoal Creek, Bond County. Patronized by the author in his youth. (Courtesy Dr. D. R. Wilkins)

boards, into which the water is admitted to set in motion the wheel whose axle extends to the main story and causes the upper millstone to revolve and crush the grain between it and the lower stone, which remains stationary.

The machinery about the mill is crude and substantially all of wood, mainly ash, oak and hickory. There are wooden axles, wooden cogs, wooden pinions, wooden shafts, wooden levers; a wooden frame for the saw, and a wooden carriage to move the log against the teeth of the saw, during its up-and-down motion. Lard is the lubricant used to prevent friction between the parts in motion. But despite the efforts at lubrication a great deal of friction occurred. And, as though the parts involved experienced great pain, there was no end of ear-splitting complaint—creaking of a kind that resembled groans, sighs and cries of anguish. Throughout the whole of its structure the old mill shook and trembled like a man afflicted with palsy.

Yonder is slowly coming a great log behind a heavy, strong cart drawn by several yokes of panting oxen. The wheels of the cart are ten feet high and its felloes, spokes, hubs and axle strong and durable in proportion. Heavy log chains and a screw and lever attachment afford mechanical means for lifting up one end of the log and securing it under the strong axle, while the other drags on the ground.

Turning from the means and appliances used for moving sawlogs, a farmer is seen approaching and in his wagon are sundry sacks of wheat and shelled corn. The sacks and their contents are put in charge of the miller, the oxen unhitched from the wagon and allowed to browse, while the farmer, who seems to have some of the

tastes of Izaak Walton, decides to try his luck fishing for perch and sunfish in the swift-running millrace. A stout young hickory, growing on the banks of the creek, makes a convenient fishing pole; and a spade borrowed from the miller turns up the earth, made rich by rotting sawdust, and reveals the needed supply of fish-worms for bait.

Next comes a bare-headed, freckled-faced, ten-year-old boy, astride a sack of corn on an old, sway-backed horse, as slow and patient as long service and a naturally good disposition can make a faithful domestic animal. The boy is green and diffident and the miller is gruff and harsh of speech. But coming to mill is one of the boy's few opportunities for getting away from the tedium of the farm, so he gladly faces the stern countenance and severe manner of the miller for the privilege of "going to mill". Henry Clay in his boyhood, it is said, went to mill in the same way and so frequently that he came to be known as "the mill boy of the slashes". While waiting for his grist the boy's time was his own, and with the old roan securely tied, he could do what he wished. The rude machinery he enjoyed seeing. The mechanism by which circular motion became converted into horizontal or perpendicular motion, and vice versa, were unfailing sources of interest. Just above the mill was the millpond, with its deep water that served all the men and boys who were expert swimmers as a place to bathe and swim. Down the creek below the mill was shallow water for those who were not swimmers. At one edge of the millpond and fastened by a chain to an exposed root was a canoe made from a great elm log. Overhanging the opposite bank were young willows, with their drooping branches

dipping their fresh young leaves in the water. A little back from the water's edge was the great white trunk of a sycamore, that above spread out its branches upon which were immense broad leaves. The lower portion of the trunk was hollow and, beginning at the ground at one side of the tree, was an opening that a man could walk into. Below the mill was the bridge across which the main stage road led eastward from the village. This bridge was made wholly of wood, for as yet iron and stone were not used in this new locality in the building of such structures. Farther down the creek was the mysterious "suck-hole", wherein three men and two boys had been drowned, all of whom were good swimmers. And near this spot of evil repute the creek made a sudden turn and, after flowing at a right angle to its former course for a time, doubled back, and having reached the line of its former channel, again flowed south. The loop thus formed was known as "Horseshoe Bend", and among the early settlers was a well-known landmark.

At the lower end of the bend was a great drift running out into the stream, and made up of debris of all kinds—logs, brush, fence rails, pieces of boards, cornstalks, bunches of loose straw, and in fact nearly every object that sometime before had floated down in the freshet, all lodged against a great, uprooted tree that had been caught and anchored by some obstruction in the middle of the stream. A most fit harbor was this drift for certain forms of reptilian life. Watersnakes found a congenial home in its interspaces. Snapping turtles crawled up on the logs, sunned themselves, and at the approach of supposed danger, suddenly dived into the water with a noisy plunk. From the intrica-

cies of the drift, great bull frogs made the bottom resound with their deep bass.

But the miller has had time to grind the farmer-fisherman's grain and that of the bare-footed boy of promise, as well. Both man and boy come up the bank to the mill with a string of fish in their hands. Each of these is impaled on a stick that after passing under the gills of the fish is run out at its mouth. Fortunately, save one, the fish are all lifeless. The exception is a channel cat which, like its namesake, had nine lives and notwithstanding its tortures, flounced its tail vigorously in earnest protest. The man's grist was ready and the miller, having taken out his toll, put the remainder in the wagon behind the oxen. Strange to say, three times as many sacks were needed for the products of the wheat as were required to bring that cereal to the mill. The increase was not in quantity, but quality. Where there had been only wheat, there now was flour, bran, and shorts. The timid boy's grist was ready too, though little cared he had the whole day been taken in grinding his one sack of corn; for the old mill and all about it were of perennial interest to him. It is now not far from midday and the sun is warm, indeed, almost hot. In the back yard of the house in which the miller lives is a famous well at which for many years the thirst of man and beast had been quenched. It is within the yard fence and just off the main traveled road from whence it is in plain sight and upon which a stranger is seen approaching on horseback. The well was walled up with rock taken from a nearby hill-side, and over its top was a curb of rough, warped boards. Projecting from one side of the curb is the crank which turns the windlass, about which wound the rope and

chain attached to the well bucket. To empty any water that might be in the bucket is the work of a moment. Then dropping it over the well and pressing your hand on the windlass, as a sort of brake, you let the rope unwind and soon the bucket reaches the water at the bottom.

A few turns of the crank and the bucket is at the surface, where it is lifted to the edge of the curb and balanced while man, boy and stranger put their lips to its margin and slake their thirst; and to each and all of these this seems like the nectar of the gods. Man, boy and stranger are hot and thirsty and are alike in blissful ignorance of disease germs and parasites. Meanwhile, oxen, horse and sway-backed roan have satisfied their thirst at the trough, and with driver and riders in their places and started on the road to the village, they soon reach the foot of the hill that led up the side of Shoal Creek bluff. The hill was long, steep and far and wide was known as Hackberry Hill, taking its name from a large tree of that name that for long stood about half way up its ascent. This tree finally went down in a wind storm and all that now remained of it was its ragged stump.

What a history Hackberry Hill could have revealed had it only been gifted with the power of speech! How many teamsters had stopped at its brow to "lock" the wagon by securing one wheel with the lock-chain! How many drivers had stopped at its foot to give their teams a rest, before attempting to climb its steep sides! After heavy rains, how great the number of wheels that had mired down in its soft, red clay! How many people in vehicles had shuddered at starting down its steep declivity! More than one harness had given way, more

than one neckyoke had broken, more than one life had gone out in attempting the drive down Hackberry Hill. Upon its brow, at the roadside, was a mound upon which sturdy young hickories were growing, and beneath which a number of Indian braves were buried. Driving or riding past this mound at night more than one youthful traveler had felt a strange, indescribable feeling under his hat, akin to one's hair rising on end. Tortured with less gruesome feelings the more mature passer-by had his thoughts revert to the pioneers, when

"Around their huts the wily Indian crept,
His shaft as sudden as the serpent's sting,
And many a weary mother, as she slept,
Was startled by the war-whoop's dismal ring,
The hiss of arrow and the twang of string,
Or the fierce tumult of the savage horde,
Beneath the wood in their wild jargoning;
And many a cabin by the torch was lowered,
And many a father's blood around his altar poured.

"Death came in many forms,—the vengeful snake
Unloosed its venom with unerring aim,
The burly blackbear loitered in the brake,
And nightly to the hill the panther came,
And stealthily outstretched its agile frame,
To watch and seize the unresisting prey;
Aye, there were perils more than tongue can name,
That compassed these old foresters,—yet they
With souls of flint, toiled on, thro' all that twilight gray."

## CHAPTER X.

### Schools, Scholars and Teachers.

Beside yon struggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitable way,
There in his noisy mansion skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school. . . . .
—*Goldsmith.*

Said the master to the youth,
We have come in search of truth.
—*Whittier.*

Seraphs share with thee knowledge. . . .
—*Schiller.*

My first recollection is of a prairie home and a two-story, unpainted frame house where I first saw the light of day. Hard by was the cabin where my older brothers and sisters were born, and to the west was the almost boundless extent of Looking Glass prairie, a veritable wilderness of blue-stem (prairie grass).

In the fall of 1848, my father and his neighbors realizing that their children were in need of educational advantages, and, no schoolhouse being near, decided to improvise one. Following out this idea they concluded to utilize the old cabin that stood in my father's orchard. Accordingly the neighbors got busy and a log schoolhouse was the result.

At the middle of one side was a door that swung on wooden hinges, fastened with a wooden latch and had the proverbial latch-string hanging on the outside. A very large chimney, made of sticks and clay, occupied

the greater part of one end of the structure, and a log cut out of the other end and a row of window panes set edge to edge in the opening, made a long window opposite the fireplace. Thus was this log schoolhouse given the three essentials of heat, light and ingress and egress.

But how about seats and desks? This need the rude workman promptly supplied. Immediately under the window large auger holes were bored, in these strong oak pegs were driven and on them was placed a long, wide, unplaned board. In the rounded sides of slabs other large auger holes were bored and other strong pegs driven which served for legs when the slabs, now transformed into seats, were turned with their flattened surfaces uppermost. Several of these slab seats were placed along the walls and others in the center of the room. The "master" (teacher) occupied a split-bottom chair and in front of him was a candle-stand. This teacher was an Irishman who bore the famous name O'Conner, and like Goldsmith, his gifted countryman, he played the flute. This was the first instrumental music I ever heard, and no orchestra that I have since listened to has charmed my ears as did the simple tones of O'Conner's flute.

O'Conner was a lame man who walked with a crutch under one arm and a cane in his free hand. From some cause the growth of one leg and foot had been arrested in childhood and the affected member was only about half the size and length of the other. His little foot and short leg dangling at the side of the other when he walked, was always a curious sight to my eyes.

Of long winter evenings, when all would be seated before a huge wood fire, my mother sewing or knitting,

Pioneer Log School House.
(Courtesy Mrs. C. J. Hayes, Urbana, Ill.)

Slab-Seat with Diagram for Playing Game of Fox and Geese. (Courtesy Mrs. C. J. Hayes, Urbana, Ill.)

my father with book in hand making himself comfortable after a day out in the cold winter weather, my sisters engaged with their lessons, the cat contentedly purring on the hearth, and last, but not least, the teacher in "done-up" white shirt and "store-clothes", had the place of honor, his crutch beside him and his short leg hanging from the chair, and a little time before all went to bed, maybe, would begin playing some old melody on his flute, then and there I realized that Paradise had come to me.

In its way the lame Irishman's school was popular and pupils came to it from far and near, some of them young men six feet tall. Those of the latter who lived at a distance were occasionally weatherbound, and in such emergencies would seek and find shelter under my father's always hospitable roof. Think of it! Only two rooms in which father, mother and five children, ranging from a babe in arms to a girl just budding into womanhood, and yet room was found for the teacher who boarded with us! Then, when a hard storm came unexpectedly, room was somehow, somewhere, found for one, perhaps two and possibly three additional human beings in those already overcrowded two rooms, situated away out on the wind-swept, storm-visited prairie.

O'Conner's was the first school I attended, and the first day a new, blue-backed Webster's Spelling Book was placed in my hands and opened at the page where were several perpendicular rows of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. To prevent soiling the book a thumb-paper was given me. This was a piece of square paper, folded on itself several times and inserted between my thumb and the page. The first thing a child

was taught was its letters and I remember with what trepidation I walked up to the teacher and stood before him, while with pencil or pen-knife he pointed out and named the various letters of the alphabet.

In due time the winter of 1848-9 came to an end, as likewise did O'Conner's term of school. In the early spring we moved to the near-by village from whence a little later my father started on his long journey to California. Here another log building, the discarded residence of one of my uncles, was the schoolhouse where I went to school the following summer and winter. The lady teacher of the summer school is yet alive and a ripe octogenarian. My teacher in the winter term, a young lawyer, died last year lacking but little of becoming a centenarian.

One of the hardest things for children of my generation to master, was penmanship. Steel pens had not yet been introduced into general use and one of the duties of the teacher was, with his pen-knife, to fashion pens for his pupils from goosequills. Every pupil was expected to bring goosequills from his home, as nearly everyone kept geese from whose wings quills could be plucked at any time. No little of the ink in use in that day was made by dissolving copperas in water in which oak bark had been soaked. The tannin in the bark combining with the sulphate of iron (copperas) produced a beautiful black ink. At the village store foolscap paper could always be purchased. This was in size about eight inches by fourteen, was ruled and generally of a blue tinge. Upon the first line of one of these sheets the teacher would write a "copy" for the pupil to imitate.

The schools of that era were what were known as

subscription schools, and each parent or patron paid for what schooling was furnished. When a school was contemplated the community was canvassed with a view to getting as many "scholars" as possible. A "scholar", in the sense used, was a certain specified number of days which the teacher agreed to teach one pupil for a stated price. Sometimes a man with, say four children, would subscribe two scholars and divide the time among all four, some assisting at home while the others were in school, thus alternating study and work.

The subscription school had one drawback—the very poor man could not pay the price and consequently his children suffered the consequences. However, after a time the subscription school was succeeded by what was popularly known as the free school. This in Illinois occurred in 1855 when an act was placed on the statute book providing that all school expenses should be raised by general taxation. Since that date no child in Illinois has remained from school because his parents were unable to pay tuition. When this law was first enacted its enthusiastic sponsors seemed to think the millennium would come after it had been in operation for a time. It was believed that ignorance, poverty and crime would be banished from the State. That it has had very much to do in making education more general, no one can question. That there is less poverty than there would otherwise have been, is perhaps true. As to its effect in reducing crime, that is questionable. At all events, it without doubt enabled many deserving boys and girls to get an education and occupy a higher plane in life.

Some years before the enactment of the free-school law some of the leading citizens became ambitious to

have an Academy in the village, and to further this a generously-disposed resident donated a piece of ground as a site for the structure. Later plans were made for a two-story frame building; the lumber was hauled to the ground and the carpenters got the frame in readiness, after a good deal of time spent in sawing, boring holes, mortising, making tennons, and strong oak pins. Then a day was set for the raising, in which every able-bodied citizen was expected to bear a part and work with a will.

A sturdy man with a stentorian voice, a local Methodist exhorter, was chosen foreman, and when everything was ready—when ropes, tackle and pulleys were in place and every man at his post—the foreman stepped a few paces aside, and in a vehement manner and loud voice gave the command: "He-yo-bouse her up!" "He-yo-bouse her up!" At each command, those at the ropes gave a strong, concerted pull and in due time a given portion of the frame was in the air where an agile man, having mounted the swaying beam, drove home several wooden pins and thus secured it in place. This was followed by one and another part of the frame of the building, till finally every post, every beam, every joist and every brace found its intended location.

Later the structure was enclosed, shingled and floored, but here, for want of money, the work halted. Meanwhile, a summer term was taught within its walls. Fortunately a man moved into the community who had some ready money and generously offered to advance the sum needed to finish the building. The offer was accepted and then plasterers, finishers and painters completed the work. Thus, finished from foundation to roof-tree, the structure was taken over by the district

and, for more than a half-century thereafter, served the people as an eligible schoolhouse. In its early years it was called "The Academy", and indeed, by this name it continued to be known while children grew from infancy to adult life. Something more than a hundred pupils attended the school in this building, and these were in charge of a gentleman principal and a lady assistant. In addition to the seven branches required by law, namely, reading, writing, arithmetic (the three R's), spelling, history, geography and grammar, Latin, algebra, chemistry and philosophy (physics) were taught. Unfortunately there were no chemicals and no apparatus to demonstrate the work in chemistry and physics. Nevertheless not a few of the more important rudiments of these sciences were someway worked into the nascent and always receptive minds of these students.

"Olmstead's Natural Philosophy" was the text book used in physics, and among other things it delineated the wonderful working of Morse's electric telegraph; the great power of Watt's low-pressure engine and the remarkable motor capabilities of Stevenson's locomotive.

Silliman's work on Chemistry was in our hands and its opening sentence, "An Experiment is a question addressed to nature" will never be erased from Memory's tablet as long as reason keeps its throne.

We used Ray's Arithmetic, and who that studied this, can ever forget the problem: "The hour and minute hands of a clock are together at noon. When will they be together again?" And further, who can forget how he puzzled his brain over it?

One of the important factors in the schools of that day was Webster's Elementary Spelling Book. Who

that ever saw it can forget its two blue backs between which intervened a narrow band of red! On one of its front pages was some sort of seer or prophet, leading a child with one hand and pointing with the other to a supposed temple of fame situated on an almost inaccessible rocky eminence. Then followed a b, abs; then in perpendicular columns, its words of two syllables accented on the first; others, two-syllables, accented on the second and so on up to "im-ma-te-ri-al-i-ty", a word of seven syllables that was the delight of the bright girl as she spelled and pronounced each syllable separately. Toward the end of the speller was a picture of good, old dog Tray who was so unfortunate as to fall into bad company and in consequence became the recipient of numerous kicks and cuffs. There was also the fable that illustrated the supreme importance of knowing "*whose ox had been gored*". Next came the picture of the old man chiding and throwing grass at the boys who were up in his apple tree helping themselves to the fruit; and their taunting words and teasing pantomime that finally prompted the owner to pick up some large pebbles and say: "If neither words nor threats will bring you down, I will see what effect stones will have." Of course the young thieves came down and took to their heels.

How faithful the brain cells have been in keeping an imperishable record of the old-time Spelling Bees! Not infrequently these were held on long winter evenings at the schoolhouse and were attended by all ages and all classes. Two persons, known to be good spellers, would "choose-up", that is, select persons to spell on their side, and when these had taken their places, two long rows would face each other in standing position.

Pocahontas School House ("Academy"), where (in the 50's), author obtained his preliminary education. (Courtesy Dr. D. R. Wilkins)

The words would be "given out", or pronounced, by the teacher and in turn given to an individual on one side, and next on the other, and when a word was misspelled, the person missing it would sit down and for the time be "out of the game", so to speak. Who does not remember the modest, quiet girl who, as someone said, had "swallowed" the spelling book and in consequence spelled down the whole school and, indeed, all competitors.

Not infrequently on Friday afternoons the whole school would have a spelling bee. At other times on Friday afternoons there would be declamations and compositions, participated in by all the older pupils. Webster's speeches afforded favorite selections, especially his reply to Hayne and his John Adams speech, beginning: "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my heart and hand to this vote." Other favorites were Reenzi's address to the Romans, ending with: "Rouse, ye Romans! Rouse, ye slaves!" stirring words that gave opportunity for the school's champion declaimer to show his ability at its best. A few of the boys declaimed well and creditably, but the majority made sorry work of it. Most of them were at a loss what to do with their hands and not a few would recite a few words of the piece chosen, hesitate, stammer, forget and sit down.

The compositions were, for the most part, crude and insipid and some were purloined. Now and then there would be one that gave promise of future ability to write. "Spring" and "Things I Like to See", were favorite topics for the girls' compositions. One pupil of German parentage, whose people lived on a neighboring farm, wrote a composition "On a Mule", the first

words of which were: "A mule is better than a horse. In fact a mule is the best horse we've got. One reason is, a mule hardly ever dies. I never knew one to die in my life!"

We used the McGuffy Readers—the McGuffy Readers *newly minted.* That is to say, when they had but recently come from the brain and hand of their author and compiler, and were not *edited, re-edited, amended* and *worked over* by aliens as we have them today. As all know, hash is never equal to a fresh beefsteak. Who that grew up with these readers in his hand can ever forget the two brothers at Christmas time, one of whom was provident and carefully untied the cord about his presents and put it in his pocket, while the other cut and threw away the string about his packages. A little later the improvident brother was chagrined when he saw his brother take from his pocket a cord and use it for a top-string, while for want of one his own top could not be used. Some one has said that this story so impressed its lesson upon the rising generation that much string of *questionable* value was saved, at the cost of much time of *unquestionable* value. However, the lesson inculcated was a valuable one in various ways.

Then there was somebody's graphic description of the burning at Rome of the great Amphitheater and the consequent escape of hundreds of ferocious wild beasts.

Then there was that old-time exhortation in verse:

> "If at first you don't succeed,
> Try, try, try again!
> Time will bring you your reward," etc.

I attended school in "The Academy" from the time

of its completion till the breaking out of the Civil War; and when it had faithfully served the community for a half-century I had the pleasure of attending a celebration held under its roof in commemoration of this fact. I owe no little to the schools of my village, taught in this so-called "Academy". I also owe much to the teachers who taught within its walls. Among these I recall one by the name of Green who encouraged me to study and get an education; and whose delight was to call attention to the merits of the various writers whose contributions could be found in the advanced Reader. Another one of my teachers was Charles W. Johnson, my cousin, and ten years my senior, who later was a good soldier and officer in the Civil War. His son, the Hon. Albert Johnson, now represents the Third District of the State of Washington in Congress.

## CHAPTER XI.

### In and About an Illinois Cornfield in the Fifties.

> Welcome *weelfare* of husbands at the plow.
> —*Gwin Douglas.*
> The green-haired maze, her silken tresses laid
> In soft luxuriance on her harsh brocade.
> —*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

The beginning of the second half of the Nineteenth Century found much of what is today the middle West not yet brought under cultivation—especially was this true of Illinois, then known as the "Prairie State".

The first plowing of the sod, ordinarily referred to as "breaking prairie", was in its way an arduous undertaking, and the usual outfit for this was a large, strong plow drawn by oxen. Immediately in front of the point of the plow was a coulter, a strong piece of iron securely fastened to the beam and provided with a sharp cutting edge, which divided the sod turned over from that remaining. As a result of this arrangement, the turned-over sod was of a uniform width and thickness. Six yoke of oxen not infrequently comprised the propelling power of one of these plows which opened a furrow two feet or more in width, and cut roots, and any ordinary obstruction, with the utmost facility. This plow, like all others of its time, had handles, but in addition was attached by its beam to a pair of low wheels which held it steady and kept it from turning over.

The man who drove the oxen, the ox-driver, was a unique character. He was coarse, rough, had a loud voice and could "swear by note" when the emergency seemed to demand it. He carried a long, heavy ox-whip, the insignia, as it were, of his calling. It was made of twisted raw-hide, in its thickest part was an inch in diameter, and was attached to a long handle made from a small, growing hickory upon which the bark remained. This whip he was fond of flourishing and cracking with a sharp report, and meantime any laggard in the team was sure to get from it a prompt stroke. For each of his oxen he had names and when they were pulling the plow he was constantly directing this one, correcting that one, and chiding the other. It was "Gee, Buck!" "Haw, Bright!" "Git up, Baldy!" "What are you doing there, Spot!" and so on till none were slighted either with voice or whip-lash.

Oxen are slow, patient, easily satisfied creatures and they contributed much towards the convenience and comfort of the pioneer. Furthermore they were a minimum in the way of expense and trouble; putting a yoke on their necks of mornings was the work of a moment, and as little time was needed to remove it at night; and water to drink and grass to eat was all they required till the coming of another morning found them ready, willing and able to patiently labor and plod one more day for man, the master.

When the prairie sod was turned over in the spring it was at once planted in corn. This was usually done with a hoe (sometimes with an ax), and as the growing crop required, and received no cultivation, it was known as "sod-corn".

Not unfrequently prairie breaking occurred later and in this event the newly turned over ground would be sown to fall wheat, and a good crop under such circumstances could nearly always be depended upon.

The year following the first turning over the virgin prairie, it could be plowed with two horses and an ordinary breaking-plow and planted to any crop desired; nevertheless, it was sometimes two or three years before the last remains of the prairie sod would disappear.

In pioneer days the wooded sections of the "Prairie State" were the first to attract settlers. The watercourses were fringed with timber that grew heavy near the streams but became lighter as the prairie was approached, and when the latter was reached ended in a scrubby undergrowth of stunted hickories, scrub oaks, crab-apple bushes, hazel-brush and briars.

The point where timber and prairie met was ever a variable one, a sort of irregular shore-line that jutted out here in a little peninsula, and receding yonder, left a large open space in which the swaying prairie grass seemed like waves in a small bay.

The earlier settlements were for the most part made in the southern sections of Illinois and here the newcomer, nearly always from Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina or Virginia, invariably located upon a running stream and, furthermore, if practicable, built his rude cabin convenient to a spring of water.

But as there were not springs enough to go round, the near vicinity of one of these was often denied to him who came later. In the majority of cases, however, the early settler was so wedded to this form of water-supply that he would carry water, or rather have

some female member of his family carry it, up hills and across hollows from an indifferent spring a half-mile or more distant, rather than sink a well in his door-yard where, in most cases, inexhaustible supplies of the purest water could be had by digging a few feet.

After a time a chain of farms stretched along the timber's edge and thus it happened that the corn-fields upon these earlier settled farms would upon one side encroach upon the woods and present the feature of a timber farm, while the other would extend out in the prairie and have all the characteristics of the latter.

In early spring all the working force of the farm was utilized for getting in and caring for the growing corn-crop. As soon as frost was out of the ground, usually from the first to the middle of April, plowing began. This first plowing, or "breaking-up", was done with a team of horses or yoke of oxen, and as the ground had not been disturbed since the previous season, it was firm enough to make the plow "scour" nicely and open up a long straight furrow, from which the bright mould-board rolled up and turned to one side the rich, loose soil of the great corn-growing state.

As the whole field was turned up from four to eight inches deep, it followed that nearly everything in the vegetable or animal way that had here a home was either destroyed or seriously disturbed by the plow-share. Quails, prairie chickens, and other species of birds that build their nests on the ground had these broken up and destroyed utterly. Gophers, ground-squirrels, moles, and various species of field-mice that find homes by burrowing in the ground, had their domiciles suddenly invaded and rudely torn asunder by the plow, just as lordly man sometimes has his more pre-

tentious dwelling ruined or wiped out of existence by the all-devastating cyclone.

Sometimes snakes' eggs, irregular in outline and repulsive in appearance, were turned up with the fresh earth. Various kinds of snakes were seen; now it was a black and yellow "garter" snake, next a blue "racer", and then a blacksnake, and occasionally a rattlesnake with its beautifully mottled surface, ever busy rattles, and broad, flat head and open mouth with venomous, protruding tongue, and wicked-looking jaws, studded with poisonous fangs.

One day, with several boys near my own age, I was plowing corn, when one of us killed a striped snake that seemed to be unduly large around. Supposing it had swallowed a toad that might yet be alive we concluded to cut the snake open and give any living thing within it its liberty. So we opened up the snake, but instead of finding the expected toad, we found a great number of little snakes. Being curious to know just how many there were we counted them, and they numbered seventy-six! I related this circumstance to a Naturalist, not long since, and from him I learned that this species of snake does not propagate by means of eggs, but brings forth its young alive.

By and by the steady-going plow made the whole field black with the newly upturned soil; and next harrows were put on to further pulverize the surface. Then with one horse and a small "diamond" plow the field was laid off one way into furrows, three and one-half feet apart. These furrows when intersected by others at right angles, served to indicate where hills of corn were to be planted, thus insuring corn rows in two directions. Three to five grains were put in a hill,

and this—"dropping corn"—was usually done by boys and often by girls. These became quite expert in this work, often putting the corn in place as fast as a rapidly walking horse, with a plow behind him, would mark out the furrow. Following the dropper was a second plow that covered the corn lightly. In from one to two weeks the round, green, sharp-pointed, nail-like shoots of corn would be seen pushing through the ground. When the corn reached the height of two or three inches it was cultivated with little "diamond" plows, but the dirt was thrown from, not towards the young plants. Warm showers in May and June and hot nights in the latter month caused the young crop to grow fast, and six weeks after planting the corn was "knee-high", standing about eighteen inches in the rows.

The cultivation of the growing crop was pushed with great energy, as had been the preparation of the ground in early spring, and later the planting. The field was reached a little after "sun-up", while yet the sun was a clearly-defined round ball upon which the eye could rest steadily. As yet the great fires of day had not long been glowing, the huge bellows of nature was working slowly, the orb just above the eastern horizon was only at a "red heat", but an hour or two later would come "white heat" with its dazzling brilliancy, when no eye could dwell upon it.

In the early morning beads of dew sparkled from every blade of grass. At the upper end of each stalk of growing corn its spreading leaves came together in such a way as to form a large, open-mouthed funnel, at the bottom of which was a little fountain of water, which the converging, trough-like leaves had distilled

from the night's dews, and now it was gently passing down to the very heart and center of the growing plant.

The rows of corn, often straight as arrows, stretched across the fields in lines of beautiful green. Up one side of a row and down on the other went the plow, the stalks of corn now strong enough to bear the dirt which the little *diamond* rolled up and threw against them vigorously.

Upon the western side of the field was the open prairie, upon which horses and cattle roamed at large, and ate of the vigorous, nutritious prairie grass as freely as was breathed the fresh, pure air all about. Far to the west, across the broad, expansive prairie, could just be seen the timber-line, along which the smoke from half a dozen chimneys told where were the links in another chain of pioneer farms,—farms whose owners came to the new land of promise to better their fortunes, but firm in the faith that no place was perfect whose location was not convenient to a creek and the indispensable spring of water.

Touching, or rather pressing strongly against the eastern aspect of the corn-field, was the timber. For the forest seemed to resist stoutly the proffered neighborhood of the corn-field, and beat back vigorously the encroachments of the plow; showing its defiance by crossing the barrier set up between wild and cultivated nature, and filling the fence-corners next the field with a dense tangle of briars, wild vines, and undergrowth, while crowding against the fence on the other side was a perfect jungle of stunted, but stout forest trees, crab-apple bushes, thorns and brush, all twisted and matted together into a veritable snarl by vines crossing and cris-crossing in every direction.

At one point in the crooked rail-fence, a young hickory had grown through a crevice, and after a while, waxing strong, had straightened up and thrown the rails above to one side, thus showing its defiance of all such barriers, and readiness, if needs be, to bear them away on its stout young back.

By the early days of August, shrub, briar, bush and vine had run such wild vegetable riot that all about the fence seemed but an unsightly waste of plant life. Meanwhile, the growing corn had attained to superb beauty. Crowned with a rich, golden-yellow tassel and clothed in long, deep green leaves, that grew in gentle curves and swayed to and fro gently and softly rustled in every passing breeze, each stalk stood tall, almost stately, and already laden with its harvest of promise—a large succulent roasting-ear whose tip was trimmed with a soft, delicate silken tuft that curled over and hung down gracefully.

Upon the growing maize the faithful farmer looked with ever increasing interest. He saw "the little germinating seeds, just thrusting their pale heads up through the soil. He saw the clustering green shoots—numerous in the sign of plenty—all crowding together and clamoring for light and air, and room. He saw the prevailing of the tall and strong upthrusting stalks after the way of life; saw the others dwarf and whiten, and yet cling on at the base of the bolder stem—parasites, worthless, yet existing, after the way of life.

"He saw the great central stalks spring boldly up, so swiftly that it almost seemed possible to count the successive leaps of progress. He saw the beckoning banners of the pale tassels bursting out atop of the stalk, token of fecundity and of the future. He caught

the wide-driven pollen as it whitened upon the earth, borne by the parent West Wind, mother of increase. He saw the thickening of the green leaf at the base, its swelling, its growth and expansion, till the indefinite enlargement showed at length the incipient ear.

"He noted the faint brown ends of the sweetly-enveloping silk of the ear, pale-green and soft underneath the sheltering and protecting husk. He found the sweet and milk-white tender kernels, row upon row, forming rapidly beneath the husk, and saw at length the hardening and darkening of the husk at its free end, which told that man might pluck and eat.

"And then he saw the fading of the tassels, the darkling of the silk and the crinkling of the blades; and there borne on the strong parent stem, he noted how many full-rowed ears, protected by their shucks and heralded by the tassels and the blades: 'Come, come ye, all ye people! Enter in, for I will feed ye all!' "*

From the time I was twelve till I reached the age of eighteen years I spent the warmer months on the farm where the work was hard and the hours long, so long, indeed, that no record was kept of them. "Sun-up till sun-down" was the rule, and following this through the month of June kept me in the corn-field behind the plow something like fifteen hours. Rather hard on a growing boy, but I lived through it.

Looking back at my boy-experience on the farm, from the view-point of many years after, I can but regard it with satisfaction; for it brought me in touch with nature as nothing else would; and enabled me to learn something of animal life and vegetable life as nothing else could.

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*Emerson Hough.

Prairie Plow and Ox-Yokes. (See page 108).
(Loaned by O. W. Converse, Springfield, Ill.)

Iron Kettle, Ash Hopper and Soap Barrel. (See page 22)
(Loaned by O. W. Converse, Springfield, Ill.)

## CHAPTER XII.

### Books, Periodicals and Other Reading Matter in the Fifties.

"If I should pray for a taste which might stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness through life, and shield against ills, however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading.—*Sir John Herschell.*

> And as for me, though I konne but lyte,
> And bokes for to rede I do delyte,
> And to give I feyth and ful credence,
> And it my herte have in reverence,
> So hertely thet there is game noon,
> That for my bokes maketh me to goom, . . . .
> —*Chaucer.*
>
> A blessing on the printer's art!
> Books are the mentors of the heart.
> —*Mrs. Hale.*

Books were few and of those found in the homes a considerable proportion were of a religious nature. Of these last some were devoted to biblical history and other to Bible characters. Then there was Daubigne's History of the Reformation, Fox's Book of Martyrs, the Lives of the Apostles, Josephus, and others of a like nature. It was not uncommon to find the life of some noted preacher such as John Wesley, Lorenzo Dow, or Whitfield, and maybe a copy of The Pilgrim's Progress. Religious books, controversial in character, were favorites with some. Of books secular in nature may be

named Rollin's Ancient History, Hume's History of England, and Weem's Life of George Washington.

But in few homes were there books enough to fill a two-foot shelf, and in many instances all that would be found would be the Bible and an Almanac; the latter, truth compels me to say, was in too many cases more often consulted than the former. Almanacs were put out by patent medicine houses and very naturally were mainly devoted to exploiting their remedies. Most people swallowed the medicines no less than the recommendations that went with them, often miraculous in both claims and promises. These remedies were recommended for substantially every disease and the accounts published of their magical cures were convincing to many. There was no voice raised to controvert these ridiculous claims and the result was the patent medicine man had things his own way. In the Almanac there was always a calendar, and for almost every day there was a prediction made relative to what the weather would be. That these predictions were the baldest guess-work the reader can well imagine. To be sure the Almanac seer or prophet kept within certain bounds, as for illustration he would predict very cold weather in January, snow and ice in February, alternate freezing and thawing in March, frequent showers in April, many bright days in May, warm weather in June, hot, dry weather in July and August, light frost in September, Indian summer in October and killing frosts in November, and snow, ice and cold weather in December. Ridiculous as it now seems, when the farmers were burdened with too much rain or the crops were suffering from too little, honest tillers of the soil, otherwise sensible, would in all seriousness

consult the weather predictions of the Patent Medicine Almanac. Let it be known, however, that the Government Weather Bureau had not yet come into existence.

In many homes an Almanac would be procured at the beginning of the year and hung up in the kitchen for ready reference. Meanwhile it would become dog-eared, and with the advent of the fall months it would come to be studded all over with brown spots which in unmistakable terms told it was a convenient and much-used fly-roost. But little cared the members of the household for this desecration, and the Almanac would continue to be consulted till it was superseded by its successor at the beginning of the New Year.

The Colporteur found much more encouragement in his work in the 50's than he does today and prosecuted it with much vigor. Several times a year he would visit every house in the village and leave his religious tracts and sell Bibles and Testaments at an astonishingly low price, to all who would buy. In a gig or on horseback he would visit every house in the country and distribute his literature and sell his books. No stress of weather or other handicap would stop his work or dampen his zeal.

That was the golden era of the weekly newspaper, and subscribers looked forward with the greatest interest to the day when their paper would come through the postoffice. People had not yet been educated to the point where news a day old is considered stale. The two leading merchants in the village each took a St. Louis daily, mainly for the markets, but no one else thought of such a thing as taking a daily paper. Indeed in that time not one person read a daily where hundreds do today. Many families took a religious

weekly, and to the credit of the newspapers of that period it can be said that the "Yellow Sheet" had not as yet come into existence.

St. Louis, Missouri, forty miles west of our village, was our nearest large city, and here was published the *Missouri Republican,* a paper Democratic in politics. In the late fifties in that city there sprung into being *The Missouri Democrat,* Republican in politics, and which exists today as the last half of the hyphenated name of one of St. Louis's leading newspapers. After a career of the greater part of a century under the name *Missouri Republican,* that paper changed to *St. Louis Republic.*

Horace Greeley was in the zenith of his great newspaper career and a great many took his New York *Tribune* and received its teachings like gospel.

*Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* were about the only illustrated papers with character and standing.

Magazines were vastly less common than today. Harper's New Monthly Magazine had but recently come into existence. The Atlantic Monthly was launched late in the fifties and had the same appearance and characteristics that it has today. These two magazines had the field to themselves. Putnam's Magazine, good in its way, had a short-lived existence.

From the foregoing it will be seen that reading matter was as much too scarce then as, in some particulars, it is too plentiful today. One result of this was to make people more appreciative of what they had. So true was this that some of the old school readers were kept in the homes because of the fine literary selections in them. This was especially true of Murray's English Reader and of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Readers of

the McGuffey series, all of which were in a sense studded with literary gems. Addison, Dryden, Pope, Goldsmith, Samuel Johnson, Scott, Shakespeare, Campbell, Thompson, the Bible, Milton, Byron, Irving, Cooper, Bryant, were some of the authors and sources from which these selections were made. Further than this, well written and interesting articles were cut out of newspapers and other periodicals and pasted in scrap books where they could be preserved and read by all.

There can be little doubt that numerous young persons of that era suffered from a sort of literary starvation; I myself recall with what longing eyes I sometimes looked, from afar, upon some attractive book or magazine.

> I saw a boy with eager eye
> Open a book upon a stall,
> And read, as he'd devour it all;
> Which, when the stall-man did espy,
> Soon to the boy I heard him call:
> "You, sir, you never buy a book,
> Therefore in one you shall not look."
> The boy passed slowly on, and with a sigh
> He wished he never had been taught to read,
> Then of the old churl's books he should have had no need.
> —*Mary Lamb.*

About the middle of the fifties the villagers got together a fund and purchased the books for a small circulating Library which was destined to supply a long-felt need. Two young men who attended college and acquired some literary culture were the most active members of a committee appointed to select the volumes for the much-talked-of and much-thought-of Library. I now realize that this committee was at least

measurably qualified for the work assigned it, and among the books recommended and in due time procured I recall Hume's History of England, Macaulay's History of England, Macaulay's Essays, Addison's Spectator, Abbott's Lives of Caesar, Xerxes, Cyrus Hannibal, Cleopatra and other Ancient Worthies, Plutarch's Lives, Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Prescott's Conquest of Mexico, Milton's Poems, Bryant's Poems, Irving's Works, Pope's Poems, Mrs. Heman's Poems, Bancroft's History of the United States, The Life of Webster, Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry, etc. It is needless to add that this little library was a God-send to some of us.

In the late fifties, from the school fund of the township a certain sum was devoted to the purchase of a library of well-selected books, comprising for the most part histories and biographies.

Harper and Brothers were the principal publishers of that time. Most of the books were in relatively small type and closely printed with long paragraphs and narrow margins, consequently the printed page of the middle of the Nineteenth Century was not as attractive as it came to be fifty years later.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### Two Village Doctors.

The blacksmith ailed, the carpenter was down,
And half the children sickened in the town.
—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Up and down the village streets,
Strange are the thoughts my fancy meets.
—*Whittier.*

In the early fifties a heavy forest of shellbark hickories, burr-oak, ash and sycamores stretched like a dense, thick curtain along the banks of a stream that in its course riverward turned many mill-wheels.

A mile west of this stream the forest frayed out into a thin fringe of stunted hickories, pin-oaks, crab-apple bushes and hazel brush as it touched the prairies.

In this fringe-like margin of the forest lay a little pioneer village which had been most aptly named *Prairiedge*. It was like all of its class, a quiet village, and of mornings its inhabitants found their chief interest center about the coming of the stage coach from the east, while in the afternoons their main diversion was experienced when the stage arrived from the west.

Through the center of the village ran a common dirt-road, dignified with the name National Road, and for about a fourth of a mile this highway constituted the one principal street of Prairiedge, and upon either side of this simple thoroughfare were the dwellings of the villagers.

Upon the north side in a little unpainted cottage with

its eaves to the street lived the Old School, or Mineral doctor. Upon the opposite side of the street in an equally unpretentious dwelling with its gable to the front, lived the New School, or Botanic doctor.

Beside the dwelling of the Old School doctor was a little frame structure, boarded up square in front, with a door opening from the sidewalk, and beside which was a solitary window. Hanging upon a rusty iron rod, cooing in the zephyrs of June and creaking and groaning in the blasts of November, was a tin sign upon either side of which were the words: Salmon Tartar, M. D., Physician and Surgeon. Upon entering this little office of Dr. Tartar's, for such it was, you would see in a plain walnut case at one side of the room a number of well-worn volumes, among which were Watson's Practice of Medicine, Druit's System of Surgery, Churchill's Science and Art of Midwifery, Williams' Principles of Medicine, Dunglison's Dictionary, etc. You would also see full files of that sterling old medical periodical, *The American Journal of the Medical Sciences.* Upon shelves at the other side of the room were a few jars, bottles and packages, containing for the most part drugs. Upon looking closely, however, you would find that more than one package was labeled "Smoking Tobacco".

Sitting in a splint-bottom chair could almost always be found Dr. Tartar, a round-faced, self-contained appearing man, seemingly about forty-five years of age. He further impressed the observer as being a quiet, good-natured, contented man who was disposed to regard this a pretty good old world, notwithstanding the many mean things said about it.

At the rear of Dr. Tartar's office was a door from

which led a well-worn path to the kitchen door of the doctor's dwelling. Were you permitted to become acquainted with the inside history of this miniature highway you would probably find that very little of the good doctor's shoe-leather had contributed to its formation, but as regards his wife the same could not be said. Mrs. Tartar was a tall, angular woman with high cheek bones and flashing black eyes. She was possessed of great energy and a tongue that upon occasions could be as cutting as a knife.

Innumerable were the times when Dr. Tartar, sitting quietly smoking, reading, or lost in one of his day-dreams, having and desiring no companion but his meerschaum, which a grateful German patient had given him and which he smoked incessantly—innumerable, I was about to say, were the occasions when Dr. Tartar's studies or reveries were interrupted by the sharp voice of his wife at the back door of his office scolding him for delaying a promised professional visit or berating him for permitting his competitor across the way to get from him another patient prominent in the village.

Strange to say, Mrs. Tartar's maiden name was Sweet, and in her home she was one of those intensely energetic housekeepers who manage to keep things in a perpetual state of disorder by reason of continuous and misdirected efforts at setting them to rights. One of the articles of furniture in the Tartar household was an old melodeon which in her girlhood Mrs. Tartar had played on with some skill. Indeed, it was said that it was the melodious tones of this old-time instrument that first enticed the attention of Dr. Tartar to the black-eyed, energetic maiden. Those, however, were the good old days that had become ancient history, and

some of the profane villagers went so far as to say that later all the music the good doctor ever heard from his wife were the piercing and discordant notes of "Hell on the Wabash".

So much for Dr. Tartar. What of his competitor across the street, Dr. Tobias Tansy? beside whose dwelling was a little frame structure the almost exact counterpart of Dr. Tartar's office save that it was adorned with a most conspicuous sign in big letters and which was as follows: "Infirmary of Dr. Tobias Tansy, Botanic and *Re*-Form Physician". Upon entering this structure one would see one side of the room occupied by shelves upon which were many jars, bottles and paper boxes filled with herbs, roots, and other products from the vegetable kingdom, and prominent among which were packages and containers labeled "Lobelia". Upon some shelves on the other side of the room were a few books and periodicals, prominent among which were Dr. Samuel Thompson's Manual of Practice, while among the medical papers were the "Lobelian", "The Lobelia Advocate", "The Lobelia Sentinel". There was also "The Botanic Recorder", in the pages of which occurred many times, in reproachful reference to the Dominant School of Medicine, the words, "Regular", "Medical Monopoly", etc. Standing in the middle of the room could not unfrequently be seen a tall, lean man with a hooked nose and large mouth, and who in accord with the fashion of the times was without whiskers, though his face was covered with the bristly product of a weeks's neglect of the use of the razor. It perhaps need not be said that this man was Dr. Tansy, who had a *much-jointed* appearance from seemingly

possessing a profusion of knees, ankles, elbows and wrists.

Such was Dr. Tobias Tansy, whose dress was as little attractive as his figure was awkward and ungainly. His "store-clothes" hung upon him in a way that formed unseemly wrinkles and doubled into many ungraceful folds, and upon his head was a high ("plug") hat that was pushed down till it nearly rested upon his big ears. Unlike Dr. Tartar, Dr. Tansy was a great talker and intensely energetic as well. He never tired of expatiating upon the many claims and virtues of the "Botanic", or as he termed it, "The *Re*-Form System" of medicine.

But ungainly and unattractive as was Dr. Tansy, he had for a wife a sweet, comely woman who had the esteem and respect of all who knew her.

Thus it was the easy-going Dr. Tartar had his energetic, ambitious wife to prod him up and make him pull up his end of the professional double-tree; and the always energetic, over-zealous and always-talking Dr. Tansy had a wise, tactful and popular wife to smooth out and make more tolerable her husband's shortcomings and eccentricities.

But notwithstanding the domestic influences exerted upon these two disciples of Aesculapius, it came to be a saying in the village of Prairiedge, that Dr. Tartar was all right if you could ever get him, and that on the whole Dr. Tansy was well enough if you could ever get rid of him.

As time went by it came about that about half the villagers preferred a quiet, self-poised, still-tongued physician who stirred up their livers with calomel, loosened their phlegm with tartar emetic, and physicked

them with Epsom salts; and so very naturally this half of the community employed Dr. Salmon Tartar.

The other half preferred an energetic, fussy, talkative doctor, who sought to account for and explain everything, and who touched up their livers with leptandrin, physicked them with mandrake, puked them with lobelia and loosened their phlegm and "inards" at the same time. So very naturally the latter half of the Prairiedgers employed Dr. Tobias Tansy.

The principal diseases these doctors had to contend with were, in the colder season, pneumonia, commonly known as "winter fever", colds, coughs, and an occasional frost-bitten limb. In the warmer season, bowel troubles of various kinds, such as diarrhoea, dysentery, usually called "bloody flux", "summer complaint", cholera morbus, etc.

"Summer complaint" was the warm weather disease that most affected infants and was often fatal. Improper food was in most instances the cause of cholera morbus in grown people and "summer complaint" in children. Violent vomiting attended the inception of many diseases.

With the approach of the fall months a great many were stricken with "chills and fever", which certain ones always referred to as "ager" and others called "the shakes". Bilious fever was another form of malaria. Typhoid fever prevailed to an extent but was never called by that name, but was known as "nervous fever", "slow fever", "autumnal fever", etc.

Among accidents were broken bones, ax-cuts, snake-bites, and lacerated wounds from various causes and an occasional bullet wound.

A boy or girl that had not had measles, scarlet fever,

chicken-pox and whooping cough was looked upon by his or her associates as little short of abnormal.

Flies, fleas, bed bugs and other insects doubtless spread catching diseases, but as the germ theory of disease was as yet many years in the future, no one ever so much as dreamed of the danger which these pests might have in store for humanity.

At times real Asiatic cholera would claim its victims from among the residents of the village and surrounding country. When this disease was prevailing as an epidemic some one would visit St. Louis, unfortunately contract the disease and later give it to others.

My kind reader, for the moment I am going to take the liberty of imagining you in your younger years and a resident of Prairiedge and a victim of, say a severe attack of chills and fever—so severe, in fact, that your parents decide to send for Dr. Tansy. One of Dr. Tansy's virtues was prompt response to professional calls, and consequently it was not long till that worthy was at your bedside. He feels your pulse, looks at your tongue, clasps your forehead with his long, bony fingers, and meanwhile has a great deal to say about your foul "stomic", gorg'd "bill-yary" passages, *con*-gested intes-*tines* and the promptness with which the "*Re*-form system of treatment would bring relief. He asserts that "lobely" will act like a charm in your case, and straightway gives you a vomit with that drug that is vastly worse than the disease he is striving to cure.

Meantime he charges your mother not to give you a drop of water while your fever is up! Next he observes that some doctors give quinine in such troubles but that medicine is liable to "settle" in the bones and should

not be used. Having said this and a good deal more along the same line, Dr. Tansy puts up six large powders that you are to take three hours apart till all are used. As the medicine is known to be very bitter your mother decides to administer it in baked apple. Accordingly she covers a spoon with a layer of apple, puts the contents of one paper in the middle of this, and spreads over all another layer of apple. Then she directs you to swallow all at one gulp! This you endeavor to do. But unfortunately you get only half the apple and the whole of the bitter taste of the medicine, enhanced by the acid in the fruit. This experience makes you more cautious with the next dose, with which you are more fortunate, and in the end you manage to get down all the powders.

As a result of the treatment your ague was broken and you and your parents rejoice in Dr. Tansy's skill. But alas for fallible humanity! for after reaching manhood you learn that Dr. Tansy's blue powders were a mixture of quinine and Prussian blue!—that the quinine was the efficient ingredient and that the Prussian blue was used to disguise it and give the impression that an entirely different drug was being used. Thus the uninitiated were led to believe they were using an equally efficient but a far less dangerous drug than quinine.

Many years ago, you, my imaginary resident of Prairiedge, obeying the behests of fortune, took your leave of that village; and in the hard battle of life that you were compelled to wage you became absorbed in your surroundings. Meanwhile the months run into years, the years into decades, the decades into tens, twenties, thirties, forties, when one day, tired of the

A Mid-Nineteenth Century Ideal Milk-Maid.

strife and turmoil, the memory of Prairiedge and the peaceful associations of your childhood come up in perspective and seem so sweet and restful that you find yourself filled with a longing to once more tread the green pastures, stand beside the laughing waters and loiter for a time in the land that gave you birth. Finally this longing so preys upon you that one beautiful morning in June you find yourself aboard a railway train bound for Prairiedge. Very naturally, for the time being you are living in the past, and as you look down the dim perspective, a thousand memories crowd your brain. Prominent among these is the memory of the old times, the old place and the old friends, and you recall those beautiful lines of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes:

"There is no time like the old time when you and I were young,
When the buds of April blossomed and the birds of springtime sung;
The garden's brightest glories by the summer suns are nursed,
But O, the sweet, sweet violets, the flowers that opened first.

"There is no place like the old place where you and I were born,
Where we opened first our eye-lids on the splendors of the morn,
From the milk-white breast that warmed us, from the loving arms that bore
Where the dear eyes glistened o'er us that shall look on us no more.

"There is no friend like the old friend who has shared our morning days,
No greeting like his welcome, no homage like his praise;
Fame is the senseless sun-flower with gaudy crown of gold,
But friendship is the breathing-rose with sweets in every fold."

Arrived at Prairiedge, the first person you meet in getting off the train is an old schoolmate whom you had last known as a round-faced boy with laughing bright eyes. But now he is a gray-bearded, dim-eyed grandfather. With this old schoolmate you go over the history of the Prairiedgers of your boyhood days. You are pained to learn that whole generations of Browns, Harneds, Smiths, Plamts, Joneses, and aye, of Johnsons, have found their last and final home in the village graveyard, since last you set foot on the cherished soil of Prairiedge.

But you are pleased to find that Dr. Salmon Tartar is yet living and a resident of the village as of yore. His wife, whom you supposed would have long since tormented the life out of her husband, you learn, died many years ago.

Dr. Tobias Tansy, too, you find has been in his grave for many years, but his sweet-tempered wife, after the death of her husband, accepted the superintendency of a Home for the Friendless in an adjoining county, into whose borders had gone the story of her many virtues.

While you are talking a fine, hearty-looking old gentleman comes along the street who you learn is none other than Dr. Salmon Tartar. You approach him, shake hands, fall into conversation and learn that he eats well, sleeps well, plays with his grandchildren and is in the enjoyment of a green old age of satisfaction and contentment. In due time you part company with this fine old octogenarian with the wish that he could somehow convey to the world his secret of knowing so well how to grow old gracefully.

Having thus met and conversed with one of the village doctors of your childhood days, you find yourself

curious to learn the particulars of the death of the other, Dr. Tobias Tansy. So you again accost your old schoolmate and get the desired information.

It seemed that in the month of March, late in the fifties, Dr. Tansy took a violent cold and at once there rang in his ears the scriptural injunction, "Physician, heal thyself"! So at five o'clock one evening he soaked his feet in warm water, drank a quart of Composition tea and went to bed. Failing to get relief after an hour or more he arose, drank a saucerful of a decoction of red-pepper, and with the assistance of his wife took a hot steam bath from an infusion of catnip, pennyroyal, horehound, boneset, tansy, chamomile, dogfennel, smartweed and some half-dozen other herbs. Failing to get relief from the steam bath, and especially failing to sweat as freely as he had hoped to do, the patient got out of bed, stripped off his clothing, and against the earnest protests of his wife, poured a bucket of ice-water over his shoulders, rubbed himself down with a coarse towel, and ended by taking a teacupful of a strong infusion of lobelia. "There's a whole lot in the *Re*-form System of Medicine", remarked Dr. Tansy as he once more sought his couch.

Next morning he was found dead in bed, and at the coroner's inquest, held a few hours later, Dr. Tartar had enough of the true milk of human kindness in his make-up to assign "heart-disease" as the cause of death.

At last, after having met the few living who can talk over with you the people and things of forty-odd years before, your thoughts turn to the dead, and with the thought of meeting other, though sad, reminders of the past, you direct your footsteps toward the "burying-ground" a half-mile north of the village. Surrounded

by a rough board fence upon a little elevated spot in the timber is this God's-acre of the good people of your childhood, and as you approach its precincts a pair of turtle doves are cooing mournfully as though chanting a solemn dirge for the dead. The enclosure is thickly sown with graves, and upon the stones above these are many names familiar to your eyes. Among the rest one slab arrests your special attention, for in addition to being over the grave of an old acquaintance, the inscription in conciseness and pithiness bears the earmarks of Dr. Tartar. You approach and read, "Matilda Sweet, wife of Dr. Salmon Tartar, born March 18, 1815, died June 30, 1859". And below this simple record of birth and death are just two words, "She Sleeps!"

Instinctively, almost, you search for another grave, and at last, beneath a graceful elm, you catch a glimpse of an old white marble slab with rounded top. Pushing aside the weeds and briars you find chiseled into the upper part of the stone a figure of a weeping willow, and just beneath the following: "Sacred to the memory of Dr. Tobias Tansy. Born A. D. 1810; died A. D. 1858. For many years an enthusiastic practitioner of the Botanic, or *Re*-Form System of Medicine. A man of forceful character who fought his own battles, consistently took his own medicine and died. Peace to his ashes."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Railroads and Other Methods of Travel and Transportation.

When I was home I was in a better place—
But travelers must be content.
—*Shakespeare.*

There is nothing gives a man such spirits,
Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry,
As going at full speed—no matter where its
Direction be, so 'tis in a hurry—.
—*Byron.*

In Illinois, the decade of the fifties was an era of railroad building, surprising in extent and undreamed of in results.

In 1850, all told there were but 111 miles of railroads in Illinois. In 1860, ten years later, there were 2,270 miles. Moreover, the 111 miles of constructed road was deemed of so little value that in 1847, twenty-four miles of this between Springfield and Jacksonville was sold for $21,000, about one-tenth of first cost.

But fortunately for all concerned with the coming in of the second half of the Nineteenth Century railway construction and railway management came to be better understood, more intelligently put through and more wisely supervised; and in consequence men of affairs became interested in railroading and capital was attracted. Fortunately, too, at almost the psychological moment, there was a large influx of the precious metal from the newly discovered gold fields of California.

It was under these circumstances that a sort of fever for railroad construction spread over the whole extent of the "Prairie State", as Illinois was then called. Among the roads built was the Illinois Central between Chicago and Cairo, with a branch extending northwest from Centralia to the Mississippi river in northern Illinois. Senator Douglas did very much in causing this road to be a reality, but the late William S. Wait of Greenville, Bond County, is entitled to the honor of being the first one to suggest this line and of doing it away back in the thirties.

The Wabash, then known as the Toledo, Wabash and Western R. R., was built across the state from a point opposite Hannibal, Missouri, on the Mississippi river, to Indiana and on east. The Ohio and Mississippi, now the Baltimore and Ohio, was built east from St. Louis through the state and on to Cincinnati. The Big Four, then the Terre Haute, Alton and St. Louis, was built between the cities named. The Chicago and Alton was built between these two cities and put in operation in the fifties; the line from Alton to St. Louis was built during the Civil War in the early sixties. In the northern part of the state several lines were constructed that have since become parts of extensive systems. Among these may be named the Northwestern, Burlington, Rock Island, and Michigan Central. In addition other lines I cannot now recall were built and at once put in successful operation. Engines and passenger cars and likewise freight cars were much lighter than today; and sleeping cars, dining cars and mail cars were not yet in use. Roadbeds were much more crooked and uneven than today and never rock-ballasted.

In addition to the above named roads work was done

on many other lines that never had a train pass over them. This was for the reason that none of them were finished; indeed, few of them were graded only in places. In that period wheelbarrows and shovels, respectively, propelled and wielded by lusty Irishmen, were almost the sole means in use for grading roadbeds. But slow and tedious as was this method, by means of it hundreds and hundreds of miles were graded that never served the purpose of the projectors and was left to be slowly worn away by rain and flood.

Nearly every town and village had its one or more enthusiasts for a railroad, some of whom were destined to be only dreamers and hence never permitted to see the "iron horse", as the locomotive was then called, whisk through the hamlet, other than in imagination. But in localities where the railroad really came, every one's countenance beamed with satisfaction; and when the first train pulled in, how many hearts throbbed the faster, how many eyes shone the brighter, and how many eyes for the first time looked on a real locomotive and the "steam-cars" behind it! Then when by good fortune certain ones were permitted to enter the *steam-cars* and ride behind the strange, puffing engine, what an indescribable sensation! How fast the fence-posts and trees seemed to rush by! How those who were permitted to ride on the first train were envied by their less fortunate neighbors!

The farmers whose homes were near enough to see the trains rush by were deemed fortunate in being permitted to frequently see so novel a sight. Those who were further away would watch the smoke of the locomotive and listen for its whistle. On a certain day, when the atmosphere was in a peculiar state, I was one

of a party of several persons who distinctly heard the whistle of a locomotive twelve miles away. This story sounds "fishy", but I can vouch for its truth.

So much for the railroads. Now a brief reference to some of the things they in no small measure superseded may interest the reader.

In the early fifties the three chief means of travel were on horseback, in wagons and by boat. When the road to be gone over was poor, or for any reason unfit for wheels, the saddle-horse was made to serve a most useful purpose and was ridden by both men and women, the latter always riding on a side-saddle. Any woman who would have ventured to ride astride would then and there have seriously compromised her good name.

The most common mode of travel, especially when several members of the family needed a conveyance, was the two-horse wagon in which windsor or split-bottom chairs would be taken from the house and placed in the wagon-bed. The average farmer thought himself well fixed when he could take his family to church or to town in a spick-and-span, newly painted two-horse wagon, drawn by a pair of well groomed and neatly harnessed pair of horses. Occasionally a one-seated "top" buggy would be seen on the road, but this was so rare as to be especially noticeable. Indeed, a buggy in that day was much rarer on the highway than is today a ten-thousand-dollar automobile.

On the chief thoroughfare the stage-coach, drawn by four horses, passed each way daily. Also canvass-covered wagons would be seen slowly moving to and fro—generally to and from the distant city on a large stream or body of water where steamboat traffic was available. Most of these were known as "market" wagons and the

driver was always referred to as a "marketer". Such wagons were always loaded with produce to be disposed of in the city. Maybe it was a load of hogs in a strong hog-coop, made especially for the purpose and which for the time being displaced the wagon-bed. Maybe it was a load of sheep in a similar coop. Maybe chickens, ducks, geese or turkeys; sometimes all four and all in a coop devised for this use.

Sometimes the covered wagon, instead of containing hogs, sheep or poultry would be loaded with human *live-stock*—"movers"—all seeking that always beckoning, always-enticing, *better* country. In this case the mother, girls and other females and younger children would be in the wagon, where the lines would be in the hands of the head of the family, and the boys would be on foot and looking after the milk-cows, horses and sometimes hogs that were driven behind the wagon. If the weather happened to be warm, one or more panting dogs with their tongues lolling out would be under the wagon and there easily keeping pace with the slowly moving cavalcade. When night came on, a convenient camping place would be selected, preferably in the timber near a spring, or stream. Supper would be cooked on an open fire made by always-easily obtainable wood. When all had satisfied their hunger, the females and smaller children would lie down in the wagon on the feather beds always taken along. Meantime the men would spread their blankets and quilts on some grassy spot under the trees. Thus all slept in the open, and it is not hard to imagine that after the day's adventures, all eyes were soon closed and all cares for the time forgotten. When night overtook those going to market they nearly always camped out and of course prepared

their own food by an open fire. Corn and oats and frequently hay were taken along for the always faithful horses.

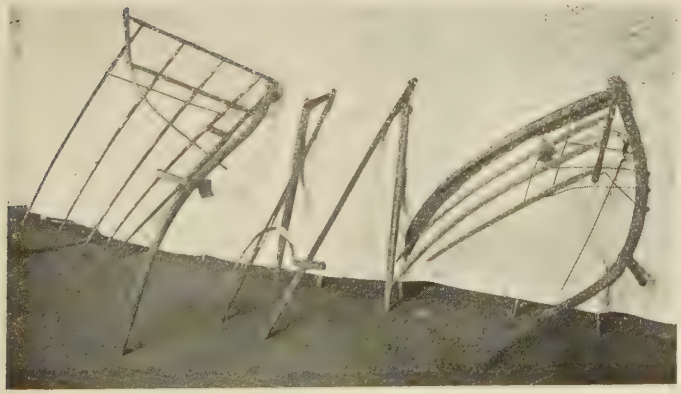
For the market droves of fat cattle might not infrequently be seen moving along in the care of men on horses aided by two or three dogs. Fat hogs, too, were not infrequently taken to market "on foot", as the term was. Indeed, where a farmer had a goodly number this was the only way to move them, slow as was the process. In that day hogs had much longer legs than they have in our time, otherwise they could never have made the long trips to market.

At best the roads were poor, bridges were always made wholly of wood, and being poorly secured in place, they not infrequently washed away.

As to water privileges, Illinois was especially favored. On the whole of its western border for a length of four hundred miles or more was the Mississippi river; on its southeastern border was the Ohio; on the east was the Wabash; on the northeastern border Lake Michigan. Penetrating its western and northerly limits was the Illinois; and in its interior were the Okaw, Kaskaskia, Sangamon and other small rivers, all when high navigable for flatboats and other small craft. On the Mississippi and Ohio fine river packets made regular trips and carried passengers and freight.

Outside the larger cities banks were few and consequently people for the most part kept their money in their homes, and, strange to say, it was seldom stolen. Cattle buyers and others who had to have considerable sums of money put it in a belt and fastened this around them, next their bodies under their clothing. In the county seats and considerable towns the leading mer-

McCormick's Combined Reaper and Mower of Two Generations Ago. (See page 11).
(Courtesy International Harvester Company)



Cradles and Reaping-Hook for Cutting Grain and Flails for Threshing it—All displaced in the 50's by Machinery.
(Loaned by O. W. Converse, Springfield, Ill.)

chant would act as a sort of banker for his patrons by keeping their money in his "strong-box".

In that period, much more frequently than today, men walked to and fro, and thus traveled through the country. Working men when going any distance nearly always carried a stout stick or cane over one shoulder, to the rear end of which was attached a small bundle of clothes tied up in a red handkerchief. Not infrequently a man would be met on the road whose every look and action told the story that he was a "*foot-pad*", or what we of today call a tramp.

Words, terms, customs, outward appearances change, but at bottom man is always much the same.

## CHAPTER XV.

### Elections, Parties and Politics.

Where village statesmen talked with looks profound
And news much older than their ale went round.
—*Goldsmith.*

The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them.
—*Cowper.*

The first election I recall was held in the fall of 1852, when General Scott ran for President. Elections in my childhood were one of the few things that served to bring to the village all of the men from the surrounding farms, and among these were sure to be two or three neighborhood "bullies" who at such times were almost always "spoiling for a fight". Whisky in those days could be obtained by the jug as easily as molasses can now, and with a "few drinks ahead" the bully was ready and anxious to get in a fist-fight. These fights were not always confined to the fists, for sometimes those engaged would bite and scratch like cats; and worst of all, attempt to "gouge" out an eye. I knew one man who had his thumb nearly bitten off in one of these election-day fights. However, in most instances officers of the law and good citizens managed to part the contestants before anything more serious resulted than bloody noses.

Substantially all the elections occurred in the fall season when apples were ripe and cider-making was on, and consequently cider could nearly always be had on

election day. Usually it was sold with ginger-bread, which was baked in large iron pans and cut in pieces about the size of one's hand which sold at five cents each, and a large glass of cider sold at the same price. A certain stand where cider and ginger-bread were sold is responsible for the following:

A stranger walked up to the stand and said to the proprietor:

"Say, mister, give me a piece of ginger-bread." The proprietor did as requested and the stranger, after eyeing his prospective purchase for a minute, said:

"Mister, would you mind takin' this ginger-bread back and givin' me a glass of cider?" Again the obliging proprietor did as requested. The stranger drank the glass of cider at one gulp, and turning on his heel started off. The proprietor called to him and said:

"Say, stranger, you forgot to pay me for that cider."

"Don't owe you nuthin'," answered the stranger.

"Why, how's that?" inquired the proprietor.

"Giv yu the ginger-bread fur it," was the prompt response.

"Well, then, pay me for the ginger-bread," suggested the proprietor.

"Why, yu'v got the ginger-bread!" was the stranger's answer.

"So I have," acknowledged the proprietor, "but I believe in the mix-up I have somehow been cheated."

In 1852 General Scott was the Whig candidate and Franklin Pierce the Democratic candidate for President. I was too young to know anything about parties, but I remember hearing older persons say the Whigs would never again run a presidential ticket; and it turned out that they never did.

The Whig party was succeeded by the American party, which was popularly known as the Know-Nothing party. This was a secret organization with grips, signs, etc.; and it is said that when outsiders tried to find out about the organization from its members the reply was always, "I know nothing about it". Hence the origin of the popular name for this party. When a boy I remember reading a book called "The Know-Nothing", written I suppose in the interest of the party of that name. Some of the tenets of this organization were opposition to the Catholic Church and insistence that America should be ruled by Americans. This organization turned out to be a political mushroom; it loomed up, increased rapidly in its following, and in three or four years went out of existence. For a time the Know-Nothings carried our county, but none of my relatives of voting age were ever its adherents.

During the winter of 1854-5 the Illinois Legislature passed an Act forbidding the sale and manufacture of intoxicants, to take effect when ratified by the suffrages of the legal voters of the state. This act was almost an exact duplicate of one which had been adopted in the State of Maine, and hence it came to be popularly known as the "Maine-law". The date fixed upon for the voters to decide whether the Maine-law should or should not be adopted in the Prairie State was June 17, 1855. Although not yet twelve years of age I was much interested in this campaign. Doubtless this was due to the fact that while not avowed prohibitionists, yet all my adult relatives were its ardent supporters. In the rural communities this proposed law found its most earnest advocates among preachers, teachers, reformers and all who were in favor of a general moral

and social uplift. On the other hand, all who made use of intoxicants in any form were stoutly arrayed against it. From my home in Pocahontas, Bond County, I one day accompanied Uncle Benjamin Johnson, a strong, forceful man and a warm temperance advocate, on a trip to Highland, Madison County. In that day Highland was almost as German as Berlin, though in the town and country surrounding was a liberal sprinkling of Swiss and French; in a word, the population was almost wholly foreign, and to say that they were all *dead-set* against the Maine-law only expresses the naked truth.

When we got to Highland we found great crowds of people and three or four speakers on as many rostrums, addressing groups of attentive auditors and punctuating every word with an emphatic gesture. What these words were we were left to guess, for everything spoken was in the German language. However, we knew that practically every argument that by hook or crook could be marshalled against the Maine-law and its believed-to-be fanatical advocates, was being driven home with vehement force and energy.

On the grounds, but at a supposedly proper distance from the speakers, an old cannon, a rusty, discarded field-piece, was fired as fast as it could be loaded. Meanwhile beer was on tap at a number of stands and, save my uncle and myself, practically every man drank to his fill. To us this was all novel, for in that day beer-drinking had not as yet become common.

At last the seventeenth day of June came; a day that was cool and cloudy and which I recall distinctly for I dropped corn from sun-up until sun-down. Had I been old enough to vote I should certainly have cast my bal-

lot for the Maine-law as all my uncles did and as I felt sure my father would have done had he been alive. But notwithstanding the work, hopes and prayers of the many who favored the Maine-law it was defeated by a large majority and the now almost forgotten effort to make Illinois a prohibition state in the 50's promptly became a thing of the past.

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854 set the political pot to boiling in earnest and it was the one thing of all others that led to the formation of the Republican party;* an organization at its inception made up of voters from all parties who had one thing in common, namely dread of the threatened encroachments of slavery.

The Compromise and all connected with it was uppermost in everyone's thought and the village statesmen never seemed to tire of discussing it. One old fellow always referred to it as the Com-*prom*-ise Line and he also called the president, *Buke*-hanan. In the minds of some the Compromise seemed to be a sort of fence which kept slavery from crossing the line 36° 30′. I recall one speaker who took advantage of this idea and said, "Yes, fellow citizens, the Compromise which our Democratic friends have just torn away was a fence, not an ordinary fence, but a fence that was *horse*-high, *bull*-strong and *pig*-tight!" As most of the speaker's audience were farmers, his argument was by them deemed unanswerable.

In 1856 there were three presidential tickets in the field: the Democrats brought out Buchanan and Breck-

*The name Republican as a party name was first made use of at a convention held July 6, 1854, at Jackson, Michigan.

enridge; the Republicans Freemont and Dayton and the Know-Nothings Filmore and Donnelson. This was the first and last time the Know-Nothing or American party appeared in a presidential election. The Republican party had only been in existence a year or two and consequently Freemont and Dayton were its first candidates for president and vice-president respectively. In that campaign a popular slogan with the Republicans was "*Free*-people, *free*-speech, *free*-labor, *free*-soil and *Fre*mont". As Fremont wore a heavy beard, then a new thing, he was by his opponents called the "woolly-hoss." Furthermore, some of these opponents always derisively said *Black* Republican when referring to the Fremont ticket.

In that day almost every community raised a flag-pole for favorite candidates. For this purpose a straight hickory pole forty or fifty feet in length would be brought in from the nearby timber and a hole dug for the reception of its larger end, usually about eight inches in diameter. Meantime a new national flag was lettered with the names of the desired candidates for president and vice-president respectively. Finally on an appointed day the partisans of these candidates would congregate, raise the pole to its place, fill in the dirt around its base, run up the flag and give three rousing cheers for Freemont, Buchanan, or Filmore as the case required. Sometimes short speeches and appropriate songs were an accompaniment of the "pole-raising."

Perhaps in the following week on the opposite side of the street a second pole would be raised for other candidates, indeed in some cases no less than three poles

could be seen in the same village, each one floating a partisan flag.

Buchanan was an elderly man and his friends were fond of referring to him as an "Old Public Functionary"; this because he had long held office and with credit to himself had been United States Senator, Secretary of State and Minister to England.

The election in 1856 came on a cold, raw, rainy day, the kind which my elders said always favored the Democrats. Be this as it may, the Democrats carried the day and on March 4, 1857, Buchanan was inaugurated President of the United States and continued in office till four years later he was succeeded by that Illinoisian among Illinoisians, Abraham Lincoln.

Type of Frame House Common in the Late 50's.

Bedstead, Trundlebed and Some Articles of Every Day Use.
(Loaned by O. W. Converse, Springfield, Ill.)

## CHAPTER XVI.

### Slavery and the Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

Slavery is a blessing established by God's decree and sanctioned by the Bible from Genesis to Revelations.—*Jefferson Davis.*

We now know that slavery was a gigantic mistake, and that Emerson was right when he said, "One end of the slave's chain is always riveted to the wrist of the master."—*Gen. John B. Gordon,* (C. S. A.)

The incurability of the evil is one of the greatest objections to the extension of slavery.—*Thomas Benton.*

> Slaves in a land of light and law;
> Slaves crouching on the very plains
> Where roll'd the storm of freedom's war.
>
> —*Whittier.*

On March 1, 1845, three days before the close of President Tyler's administration by joint resolution of the two houses of Congress, Texas was annexed to the United States—an event that proved to be far-reaching in its consequences. Indeed, it is perhaps not too much to say that this was the first Act in a great drama upon which the curtain rose not to go down till Lee surrendered at Appomattox, twenty years later. At the period of the Texas annexation the Southern slave-holders were at the very zenith of their power and with high-handed determination were bent on effecting the greatest possible extension of slavery. Moreover, in striving to accomplish their purposes they were so energetic, so persistent and so dominant that all else was made to seem insignificant by comparison. Impressed with this state

of affairs, Lord Macaulay said in the British Parliament, "That Nation (the United States) is the champion and upholder of slavery. They (the people of the U. S.) seek to extend slavery with more energy than was ever exerted by any nation to diffuse civilization."

In 1822, while Texas was yet a part of Mexico, the latter country abolished slavery throughout its whole extent. But notwithstanding the fact that Texas had thus become free soil, emigrants from our Southern States went thither and carried with them their slaves and kept them in bondage.

In 1836 the inhabitants of Texas declared their independence of Mexico and organized a Republic. This action on the part of Texas resulted in war between that country and Mexico which in one form or another, continued till the former was annexed to the United States, nine years later.

During the whole time that the Texas annexation scheme was under consideration, Mexico was on the alert and keenly alive to the situation; and no sooner had President Tyler signed the joint resolution than the Mexican Minister at Washington asked for his passports and left for his own country.

On March 4, 1845, James K. Polk succeeded John Tyler in the presidential chair, where one of his chief inheritances was our strained relations with Mexico. But instead of endeavoring to pour oil on the troubled waters—instead of striving to modify and ameliorate our strained relations he, in a few months, sent an "Army of Occupation" to the Mexican border and ordered a strong fleet to take position at Vera Cruz and, as was doubtless intended, war with Mexico was the result. A war that lasted through 1846-7 and ended early

in 1848 when a treaty of peace was made between the two countries and our late enemy ceded to us California and New Mexico, and acquiesced in our possession of Texas.

Thus it came about that John Tyler, a southern president, aided and abetted by Southern leaders, brought about the annexation of Texas; and James K. Polk, another Southern president, aided and abetted by Southern leaders, precipitated this country into a war with Mexico—all to extend the area of slave-labor. But,

> "There is a divinity that shapes our ends
> Rough-hew them how we may."

The Southerners had certainly "rough-hewn" their "ends", but a "divinity", which had in no sense entered into their calculations, was destined to "shape" them. This last came about in consequence of the discovery of gold in California in large quantities and the resulting great emigration to that New El Dorado. Most of the emigrants, however, were from the free States, a fact that had a direct bearing, two years later, when California applied for admission in the Union as a free State. That California, a part of the domain which the slave holders had regarded as peculiarly their own, should apply for admission as a free State aroused the ire of Southern leaders and as a result there occurred, between the foes and friends of slavery, one of the longest and most acrimonious discussions in our history; and the Southerners, as had become their habit, threatened to break up the Union.

At this period Clay, Calhoun and Webster, were all in the United States Senate and each bore a conspicuous part in the long-drawn-out discussion following the pro-

posed admission of California. Indeed, this proved to be their last conspicuous service in the Senate, where for many years the mere word of each carried almost the weight of law. They were known as the great "Triumvirate" and the upper House of Congress never before and never since knew their equals. Henry Clay, long a Senator from Kentucky, although a slave owner, recognized the many evils of the peculiar institution and hoped for the day when it would be abolished. Webster, the great Senator from Massachusetts, through the whole of his life was opposed to slavery. Calhoun, who through the most of his public career represented South Carolina in the National Senate, was a defender of slavery and looked upon it as only a little short of a divine institution. Clay and Webster were devoted to the union of the States, and for this were ready to sacrifice anything but principle. Calhoun, on the contrary, held the peculiar interests of the Southern slaveholding States beyond and above the Union. He loved the Union perhaps, but the South vastly more.

When the discussion over the admission of California had reached a stage of white heat, Clay, who had come to be known as the great "compromiser", sought to pour oil on the troubled waters by introducing a number of measures in the way of compromise, which later came to be known as the "omnibus" bill. In effect these provided that California should be immediately admitted; that the slave-trade should be abolished in the District of Columbia; that the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia be deemed *not* advisable; that the Territory of New Mexico be organized, etc.

In support of these measures Clay made a speech that occupied the greater part of two days and in this he

brought to bear all his gifts of eloquence and all his influence and varied powers of persuasion. Calhoun prepared a carefully written speech, but as he was in poor health and very weak, this was read in the Senate by Senator Mason of Virginia. That Calhoun's speech was able, masterly and, from his viewpoint, logical, need not be said. But in a sense it was the "song of the dying swan"; for in less than four weeks, namely, on March 31, 1850, that great apostle of Southern rights and life-long defender and eulogist of African slavery, breathed his last.

Three days subsequent to the reading of Calhoun's address, Webster delivered in the U. S. Senate his famous *Seventh of March* speech which was both a reply to Calhoun and an earnest plea for the adoption of Clay's compromise measures. Webster's speech on this occasion was a bitter disappointment to most of his life-long friends. Among the latter was the poet Whittier who gave vent to his feelings by writing Ichabod!

"So fallen! So lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory gone from his gray hairs
Forever more!
Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains:
A fallen angel's pride of thought
Still strong in chains."

In his speech Webster advocated a stronger fugitive slave-law and apologized for and, in a sense, justified the institution of slavery and for this many of his old friends never forgave him. In extenuation it may be said that he believed the Union was in danger of dissolution, and this danger appealed to him, as nothing else

could; for while he loved freedom, he loved the Union more.

In the end California came in the Union as a free State, the fugitive slave-law was made stronger, the Territory of New Mexico was organized, and, indeed, substatntially all of Clay's measures were adopted. However, these were adopted singly and not in the "omnibus" bill as was Clay's first proposal.

The death of both Clay and Webster occurred in 1852, two years after that of Calhoun. The passing of these great men marked the end of an era, the one which immediately followed that of the Revolution. Washington, John Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson and Madison were representatives of the Revolutionary era as Clay, Benton, Webster and Calhoun were of that immediately following. All of these great men, save Calhoun, knew the evils of slavery, were opposed to its further extension, and hoped for its ultimate extinction.

Calhoun, the great apostle of Southern rights, had not a few things in common with Webster, the eloquent advocate of a permanent and indissoluble Union. Both were born in 1782. Both were intellectual giants. Both were gifted orators who clothed their thoughts in clear, terse English. Both had logical minds and both were disposed to probe a subject to its ultimate depths. But here the similarity ended and divergence begins; Calhoun hailed from South Carolina and was the idol of the Slave Power. Webster came from Massachusetts and voiced the sentiment of liberty-loving New England. Calhoun asserted the divine right of property in man and urged the necessity of slave labor. Webster proclaimed the elevating tendency of free institutions and the sufficiency and dignity of free labor. Calhoun ex-

amined the theory of our government, came to believe in the sovereignty of the States, and thought the Union only a compact. Webster delved yet deeper in the science of government, searched our early National history, studied the constitution, and proclaimed the wisdom, glory and perpetuity of the Union. Calhoun favored slavery and the Union if practicable, but upheld the South and its interests at all hazards. Webster plead for the prevalence of free institutions, but above all else stood for the Union. Calhoun's tenets were the shifting sands upon which later, the ruins of the "lost cause" were destined to lie scattered in hopeless confusion. Webster's teachings were the immovable Rock upon which were laid the enduring foundations of what is today our National Union.

Meanwhile a third generation of Statesmen had come to the front who, as representative of their several constituencies, were by no means as conservative on the slavery question as were most of the leaders who preceded them. Seward, Chase, Summer, Wade, Thadeus ("Thad"), Stevens and others from the North, as radically opposed the further advance of slavery as the extension of that institution was earnestly advocated by Jefferson Davis, Toombs, Foote, Yancey, Benjamin and Alexander H. Stevens of the newer and more radical South that knew not Benton and Clay. But notwithstanding the sharp differences of these men, after the admission of California and the coincident compromise legislation of 1850, the excitement and agitation on the slavery question for the time died away; so that when in 1853 President Pierce was inaugurated, he congratulated the country upon the peaceful and quiet state of the public mind and more especially on the happy, and

as he believed, permanent settlement of all differences on the slavery question. But these pacific appearances were but a lull in the storm that was to again break upon the country—a storm that was destined to come with renewed energy, burst with terrific force and envelope the whole land till the political atmosphere was forever cleared of that poisonous taint—slavery.

This storm fell upon the country when on May 30, 1854, less than fifteen months after President Pierce's prediction that the slavery question had been permanently settled, the Missouri Compromise was repealed after a long and bitter discussion in which Senator Stephen A. Douglas, prime mover in the matter, bore a leading part.

Here it may not be out of place to say that the Missouri Compromise became the law of the land in 1820, and by its provisions African slavery was forbidden to go north of the line, 36°, 30′. By the Free State men, the Missouri Compromise had come to be regarded as a sort of bulwark against the northward encroachments of slavery, consequently, when under the lead of Senator Douglas this compact was repealed there was great indignation and excitement throughout the whole of the Northern States. The slavery question was in every one's mind and like Banquo's ghost would not down. Every village, every hamlet, indeed, almost every crossroads became a center for the consideration and discussion of this burning issue.

Speaking of the animus of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise Senator Chase of Ohio said: "It is slavery that renews the strife. It is slavery that again wants room. It is slavery with its insatiate demand for more territory and more Slave States. And what does slavery

ask for now? Why, sir, it demands that a sacred and time-honored compact shall be rescinded—a compact which has been universally regarded as inviolable north and south—a compact by which all have consented to abide."

The New York Tribune was the recognized organ of the Free Soilers and, as elsewhere said, its publisher, Horace Greely, was then in the very prime of his power as a great newspaper editor. It seemed to be his especial delight to show up the almost innumerable evils of slavery and likewise the many unworthy aims and misdeeds of the slaveholders. Practically all the Free Soilers, in what is today the Middle West (then the West), were subscribers to, and close and careful readers of Greely's Tribune. Upon not a few this paper made such a deep impression that they came to rate it next to the Bible. On the other hand no words would suffice to express the contempt and hate felt in some quarters for Greely's organ.

Coincident with the repeal of the Compromise the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska were organized. Desperate efforts were made by the South to people Kansas with inhabitants favorable to slavery. But the North was equally determined that freedom should have a voice on the broad prairies of that virgin land, and hence emigrants poured in from the Free State much faster than they possibly could from the South. But what the Slave Power failed to win fairly was sought to be secured by usurpation: And when the first election for a Territorial legislature was held, hordes of Missouri residents went over into Kansas, took possession of the ballot boxes at many of the voting places, and thus sought to turn everything in the interests of slavery. It was under these

circumstances that six thousand votes were cast, notwithstanding the fact that the legal votes of Kansas numbered less than three thousand. Strange to say, these outrages were sustained by the administration at Washington—at the head of which was President Pierce, a native, and life-long resident, of New Hampshire!

We crossed the prairie, as of old
The Pilgrims crossed the sea,
To make the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the free.
We go to rear a wall of men
On Freedom's southern line,
And plant beside the cotton-tree
The Rugged Northern Pine.

We're flowing from our native hills
As our free rivers flow;
The blessing of our Mother-land
Is with us as we go.
Upbearing like the Ark of God,
The Bible in our van,
We go to test the truth of God
Against the fraud of Man.

No pause, nor rest, save where the streams
That feed the Kansas run,
Save where our Pilgrim gonfalon
Shall flout the setting sun.
We'll tread the prairie, as of old
Our fathers sailed the sea;
And make the West as they the East
The homestead of the free.

—*John G. Whittier.*

The slavery agitation following the repeal of the Missouri Compromise produced some strange and unlooked-

for results. Among these none was more striking than its effects upon Senator Benton of Missouri and Senator Cass of Michigan.

Thomas Benton, long a resident and Senator from Missouri, in the face of what he knew to be the public sentiment of that commonwealth, voted against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

Lewis Cass, a native of New Hampshire, long a Senator from and resident of the State of Michigan, voted *for* the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, in opposition to what was known to be the sentiment of his constituents.

Missouri refused to return Benton to the Senate, and in his place sent James S. Green, an ultra southern Democrat, who would leave no stone unturned to further the interests of the Slave Power. Likewise, Michigan refused to return Lewis Cass and sent to the National Senate in lieu of him, Zachariah Chandler, a Republican who would oppose the aggressions of the slavery propagandists to the extent of his ability.

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise set in motion a sort of political cyclone that upheaved political combinations, wrecked political parties and tore asunder the political affiliations of a lifetime. The *"Old-Line"* Whig party, of which Clay had been the idol and Webster the prophet, went down, in the slavery agitation following the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, never to rise again. Meantime many thousands who had been life-long adherents of the Democratic party withdrew from that organization because it endorsed African slavery and either supported or winked at the efforts of slave propagandists. All these dissatisfied elements finally came together and organized the Republican

party whose avowed purpose was, if possible, to prevent the further spread of slavery, but with no intent to disturb that institution where it lawfully existed.

In 1856 Fremont and Dayton, Republican candidates for President and Vice-President, respectively, carried most of the Northern States, but failed in enough of these to turn the election to James Buchanan, the Democratic candidate. President Buchanan, a native and life-long resident of Pennsylvania, was inaugurated on March 4, 1857. But notwithstanding his northern birth and association he had not long been in office till he became as subservient to southern interests and slavery aggressions as had been his predecessor, President Pierce who, as we have seen, was a native and life-long resident of New England.

Relative to slavery, there were at this period what might be termed four chief schools of thought. First the old-time Abolitionists who believed that slavery was the worst of evils and its practice a crime; and who had representatives in such men as Wendell Phillips, Garrison, Gerret Smith, and Lovejoy. Second, the Republicans who were opposed to the further extension of slavery, but were not disposed to interfere with it in the Slave States; Seward, Lincoln, Chase and others were leaders in this view. Third, those who believed in popular sovereignty, familiarly called "squatter sovereignty" which contemplated leaving to the inhabitants of a Territory the decision of the question of whether they should or should not have slavery; but the adherents of popular sovereignty declared that they did not care whether slavery was "voted up, or down" —Senator Douglas was the great apostle of this view. A fourth school of thought was that founded by John

C. Calhoun who claimed that a slave holder had the same inherent right to take his slaves to a Territory that a man from a Free State had to take his hogs, horses and cattle. Jefferson Davis, Toombs, Yancey, Mason, Slidell and indeed, all the ultra Southern Democrats held to this view.

The Calhoun school went so far as to claim that slavery was national and freedom sectional. To give sanction to the idea that slaves were only chattels the ultra slaveholders contrived to have a case in point come up before the United States Supreme Court, and in due time the majority of the members of that body rendered a decision to the effect that a black man had no rights that a white man was bound to respect. This was popularly known as the "Dred-Scott" decision, from the fact that Dred Scott was the name of the negro whose status, relative to slavery, gave rise to the legal question in controversy. This decision was handed down in 1857, a short time after President Buchanan took the oath of office and by whom it was accepted as final. But this the opponents of slavery refused to do.

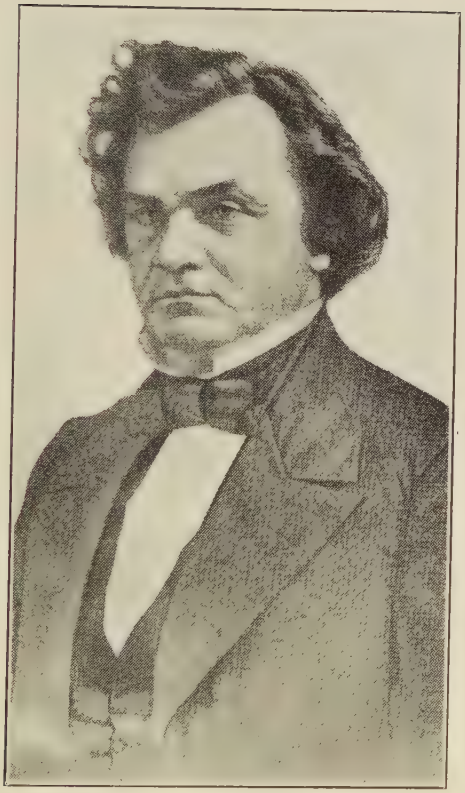
At this period things on the surface looked especially encouraging for southern plans and aspirations. James Buchanan, the newly installed chief executive, seemed disposed to go any length to satisfy the demands of the Slave Power and the Dred Scott decision making it legal for slave holders to take their slaves to the territories had just been handed down.

Douglas, the chief exponent of "popular sovereignty", was a very remarkable man who by sheer ability and industry had risen to be one of the most prominent members of the United States Senate. This prominence was added to by the leading part he bore

in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and which in the fullest sense brought him in the limelight—in the limelight, however, of very much popular disfavor. Douglas had a great deal of personal magnetism, made hosts of friends, and his partisan followers almost worshiped him. But the repeal of the Compromise was like the overturning of a hornet's nest. Consequently political friends were converted into pronounced enemies, devoted followers were alienated, and the erstwhile idol became the victim of the most bitter criticism. Meanwhile the struggle in Kansas kept up and intensified the excitement among the people; and in the midst of this the second senatorial term of Douglas was approaching its end. Accordingly in the spring of 1858 he began making speeches to his Illinois constituents in defense of his course in Washington. As a result the "Prairie State" became a veritable storm-center of the "Question of Questions".

Such was the state of affairs when Abraham Lincoln, a Springfield lawyer whose political experience covered two terms in the Illinois Legislature in the late thirties, and one term in Congress during the Mexican war, became deeply interested in what was uppermost in the people's minds, the "Questions of Questions," and challenged Senator Douglas to meet him, and discuss, in public, the various phases of the slavery issue. Douglas accepted the challenge and in the late summer and early fall of 1858 the people of Illinois had the rare privilege of witnessing a contest between two giants and listening to a discussion such as the world had seldom or never heard before.

In all there were seven joint discussions and these occurred respectively at Galesburg, Ottawa, Freeport,



Senator Stephen A. Douglas.

in Northern Illinois; Jonesboro, in Southern Illinois; Charleston, in Eastern Illinois, and Alton, Quincy and Galesburg, in Western Illinois. In addition each of the contestants spoke in most of the remaining counties. At that time I was a resident of Bond county where a date was fixed for Lincoln to speak in Greenville, our county seat. As all my people were in accord with Lincoln and as he was recognized as an able exponent of the anti-slavery cause, I very naturally was desirous of hearing him. But unfortunately for me when the long-looked-forward-to day came I was in bed suffering from an acute attack of illness. As will be readily inferred my disappointment was great, so great, indeed, that my regret at not being able to hear and see Lincoln when he came to our county, extends to this hour.

But what was my *ill*-fortune proves to be my readers' *good*-fortune; for instead of offering them my impressions of the greatest character of the nineteenth century, I have had the good luck to secure some Lincoln reminiscences from a far abler pen than my own—that of Stephen A. Forbes, Ph.D., LL.D., of the University of Illinois, who as a youth was privileged to attend the joint-discussion at Freeport, a graphic account of which follows:

University of Illinois

Urbana, Illinois, March 27, 1917.

Dr. C. B. Johnson

Champaign, Illinois

Dear Doctor Johnson:

When I was a boy of fourteen I had the good fortune to see and hear Lincoln in one of his series of historic debates with Douglas—that at Freeport, in Northern Illinois, August 26, 1858. My father, who

had died four years before, had been an anti-slavery Whig, although not a man of partisan temper, and my brother, eleven years older than I and the head of the family since my father's death, was strongly opposed to slavery. I had myself read Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," shortly after it came out in the numbers of the *National Era* in 1851, and I suppose, consequently, that I must have come up to the Freeport mass meeting with distinct prepossessions in Lincoln's favor. I do not remember, however, that I had any very definite party feeling in any direction, being, in fact, too young, or, rather, too immature, for that, unless interested and aroused by some unusual circumstance. This Lincoln and Douglas debate was such a circumstance; and I came away from it quite aflame with enthusiasm for the new Republican party and especially for Lincoln as its champion, and equally incensed against Douglas as the leader and champion of the Democrats. These boyish impressions fixed my politics, as it proved, for life, and did more than anything else to send me into the Union Army only three years later and to hold me there until the end of the Civil War. As I must have been a "fair sample" of hundreds of youths of the day who had a similar experience, I am writing you now to redeem my promise that I would give you a description of the impressions which led to this result.

The debate at Freeport was held in a natural grove on the outskirts of the town, open enough to permit the growth of a grassy turf, and the great throng assembled from the surrounding country stood, so far as I remember, during the whole debate. At any rate I did so myself, and having pushed my way, after the fashion of boys, to the very front of the assembly, I was within a

few feet of the low platform from which the speeches were made, and both heard and saw everything which went on. The contrast between the two speakers was simply immense, not in physique and bearing only, but in their relations to their partisans and to their audience as a whole. Lincoln seemed a man of the people, homelier, simpler, and plainer than the average of those before him—one who had risen above the common level by sheer force of intellect and conspicuous moral worth. His arguments were as direct in their appeal to Democrats as to Republicans, and his speech made no call upon the party passion of his followers; he seemed not so much to aim at the vindication of his party as to persuade and convince the fair-minded, the open-minded and the undecided of whatever previous party affiliations.

Douglas, on the other hand, was the aggressive, combative, defiant party leader seeking to arouse his followers to a kind of party fury, and to brow-beat and cowe his opponents by a violence of bearing and expressions of contempt which were at times little short of insulting.

When Lincoln arose to open the debate, my first feeling was a genuine shock of surprise, of disappointment, of chagrin at his homeliness, his awkwardness, his plainness of attire—at the farthest remove from the bearing, look, and dress of a boy's ideal; but when he began his argument in his high, penetrating voice, calm, clear, connected, and so simple and lucid that even I could follow it without effort, I got the first impression of my life of a truly lofty character and a great mind in vigorous action.

Lincoln, as you will remember, made the opening speech at Freeport, and although his most telling points

were enthusiastically applauded, there was practically nothing in the responses of his audience to indicate that there were any Democrats among them. Douglas, in fact, opened his rejoinder with a compliment, not to the speaker for his calm and persuasive speech, but to the assembly for "the kind and respectful attention which they yielded not only to political friends but to those opposed to them in politics." He himself received at first the same kind of treatment, being even more frequently and vociferously applauded than Lincoln; but as he warmed up to his argument he began seemingly to try to irritate his opponents by calling them always "black" Republicans, with an angry and contemptuous emphasis on the word "black." The taunt was received in silence for a few times, and then loud cries of "white, white," began to come from all directions, every time he used the offensive epithet, and the clamor presently became so great, after a peculiarly irritating application of it, that Douglas paused to remind his hearers "that while Lincoln was speaking there was not a Democrat *vulgar* and *blackguard* enough to interrupt him." It was at this point that my adhesion to republicanism became complete, and I shouted up to Douglas at the top of my boyish voice: "Lincoln didn't use any such talk." I was sharply reproved by those about me, and told that I must not "talk back"; and so stood in mortified silence until Lincoln again took the stand, when he began by saying: "The first thing I have to say to you is a word in regard to Judge Douglas's declaration about the 'vulgarity and blackguardism' in the audience,—that no such thing as he says, was shown by any Democrat while I was speaking. Now, I only wish, by way of reply on this subject, to say that while *I* was

speaking, *I* used no 'vulgarity or blackguardism' toward any Democrat." With this elaboration of my own sentiment I need not say that I was relieved and delighted, or that I joined in the hearty "laughter and applause" with which the verbatim account of the speech says that this rejoinder was received. The published report, by the way, is not complete at this point, for I distinctly remember that Lincoln twice used the word "gentleman," saying that the Democrats treated him like gentlemen, because he treated *them* as a gentleman should.

This was, of course, the crisis of my day's experience, and I recall nothing else of any consequence, probably because I had had my fill, and, like Abner Dean of the Stanislaus, the subsequent proceedings interested me no more.

Very truly yours,

STEPHEN A. FORBES.

While the leaders had implicit confidence in Lincoln's ability to hold his own many others were in dread lest their champion would prove no match for Douglas. As for the Democrats they spoke contemptuously of Lincoln and were confident he would be badly worsted.

Time works many changes. In 1858 the question often asked was, "Who is this man Lincoln?" And the answer not infrequently was, "Oh, he's a lawyer from Springfield who imagines he can debate with Douglas!" The manner and tone in which these last words were spoken cannot be conveyed, but told much of the speaker's contempt for what he conceived Lincoln would be able to achieve.

Today the young inquirer asks, "Who was Stephen A. Douglas?" And the answer that the old citizen

makes is, "Oh, he's the man who opposed Lincoln in the great debate of 1858."

In a word, in the fifties Douglas brought the unknown Lincoln in the lime-light; today the fame of Lincoln rescues Douglas from obscurity.

But notwithstanding the fears of some, in a moral and intellectual way, Lincoln more than held his own and really came out victor over the "Little Giant," as the admirers of Douglas were fond of calling him. But while in the election following the great debate Lincoln received the largest popular vote, yet the majority of the legislators elected were for Douglas and consequently he was returned to the national senate.

Although Lincoln failed of election he won a reputation in his debate with Douglas that could not be confined within state limits; and later he accepted an invitation to address an audience in New York City where he delivered his famous Cooper Institute speech that added greatly to his reputation in the East, and later helped him to win the presidential nomination.

One of Lincoln's greatly interested hearers was a certain youth who later recorded what he heard, saw and felt on that memorable occasion as follows:*

"In February, 1860, it was my good fortune to secure a personal glimpse of Abraham Lincoln, the man who was to have the responsibility as leader in the great contest for the maintenance of the Republic. Lincoln had been invited by certain of the Republican leaders in New York to deliver the first of a series of addresses which had been planned to make clear to the voters the

*George Haven Putnam in "Memories of My Youth", G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1914.

purposes and the principles of the new party. As a result of the series of debates with Douglas in 1858, Lincoln's name had become known to many Republicans in the East. It was recognized that he had shown clear understanding of the principles on which the new party had been organized and that his counsel should prove of distinctive service in the shaping of the policy of the coming Presidential campaign. The Committee of Invitation included, in addition to a group of the old Whigs, of whom my father was one, representatives of Free-Soil Democrats such as William Cullen Bryant and John King.

Lincoln's methods as a political leader and orator were known to one or two men on the Committee, but his name was still unfamiliar to an Eastern audience. It was understood that the new leader from the West was going to talk to New York about the fight against slavery; and it is probable that the larger part of the audience expected something "wild and woolly". The West at that time seemed very far off from New York and was still but little understood or little realized by the communities of the East. New York found it difficult to believe that a man from the prairies could have anything to say that would count with the cultivated citizens of the metropolis. The more optimistic of the hearers were hoping that perhaps a new Henry Clay had arisen, and these were looking for utterances of the ornate and grandiloquent kind, such as they had heard from Henry Clay and from other statesmen of the South.

My father had the opportunity, as a member of the Committee, of smuggling me in upon the platform at Cooper Union, and from the corner where I sat, I had

a fair view of the speaker. The meeting was presided over by Bryant and the contrast between the cultivated chairman and the speaker was marked. Bryant, while short, gave the impression at once of dignity and of control. His magnificent big head, with the mass of flowing hair, was that of a bard. Bryant's fame as a poet has possibly eclipsed the importance of his service as an editorial teacher with the highest standards of citizenship and as a wise and patriotic leader of public opinion.

The first impression of the man from the West did nothing to contradict the expectation of something weird, rough, and uncultivated. The long, ungainly figure upon which hung clothes that, while newly made for this trip, were evidently the work of an unskilled tailor; the large feet and the clumsy hands of which, at the outset at least, the speaker seemed to be unduly conscious; the long gaunt head, capped by a shock of hair that seemed not to have been thoroughly brushed out, made a picture which did not fit in with New York's conception of a finished statesman. The first utterance of the voice was not pleasant to the ear, the tone being harsh and the key too high. As the speech progressed, however, the voice gained a natural and impressive modulation, the gestures were dignified and natural, and the hearers found themselves under the influence of the earnest look from the deeply set eyes and of the absolute integrity of purpose and of devotion to principle which impressed the thought and the words of the speaker. In place of a "wild and woolly" talk, illumined by more or less incongruous anecdotes, in place of a high-strung exhortation of general principles or of a fierce protest against Southern arrogance,

the New Yorkers had presented to them a calm but forcible series of well-reasoned considerations upon which was to be based their action as citizens.

It was evident that the man from the West understood thoroughly the constitutional history of the country; he had mastered the issues that had grown up about the slavery question; he realized, and was prepared to respect, the rights of his political opponents. He realized equally the right of the men whose views he was helping to shape, and he insisted that there should be no wavering or weakening in regard to the enforcement of those rights; he made it clear that the continued existence of the nation depended upon the equitable adjustment of these issues, and he held that such adjustment meant the restriction of slavery within its present boundaries. He maintained that such restriction was just and necessary, as well on the ground of fairness to the blacks as for the final welfare of the whites. He insisted that the voters in the present states of the Union had upon them the largest possible measure of responsibility in so controlling the great domain of the Republic that the States of the future, the States in which their children and their grandchildren were to grow up as citizens, should be preserved in full liberty, and be protected against the invasion and the control of the institution that represented barbarity. Such a contention could interfere in no way with the recognition that was due under the obligations, entered into by the grandfathers and confirmed by the fathers, to the property rights of the present owners of slaves.

With the New Englanders of the anti-slavery group, the speaker emphasized that the restriction of slavery meant its early extermination; and with this belief he

insisted that war for the purpose of exterminating slavery from existing slave territory could not be justified. He was prepared, however, for the purpose of protecting against slavery the national territory that was still free, to take the risk of the war which was threatened from the South, because he believed that only through such action could the existence of the nation be maintained. He believed further that the maintenance of the great Republic was essential not only for the welfare of its own citizens but for the interest and the development of free government throughout the world. He spoke with full sympathy of the difficulties and problems resting upon the men of the South, and he insisted that the matters at issue could be adjusted only with a fair recognition of these difficulties. Aggression must be withstood from whichever side of Mason and Dixon's Line it might be threatened.

I was but a boy when I first looked upon the gaunt figure of the man who was to be accepted as the people's leader in the great struggle, and listened to the calm but forcible arguments in behalf of the principles of the Republican party. It is not likely that I took in at the time with any adequate appreciation the weight of the speaker's reasoning. I have read the address since more than once, and it is, of course, impossible to separate my first impressions from my later knowledge. I do remember that I was at once impressed with the feeling that here was a political leader whose methods differed from those of any politician to whom I had listened. His contentions were based not upon invective or abuse of the other fellow, but purely on considerations of justice, on that everlasting principle that what is just, and only what is just, represents the

largest and highest interests of the whole nation. As I learned from the later history, this Cooper Union speech gave the keynote for the coming campaign, and it also decided the selection of the national leader not only for the Presidential campaign, but through the coming struggle. It was through the impression made upon New York, and later upon the States of the East, by Lincoln's speech and by the personality of the man, that the votes of New York and New England were secured for the nomination in Chicago of the man from Illinois."

The presidential election of 1860 was the most remarkable and, as the sequel proved, the most eventful political contest in the history of this country. Four tickets were in the field: The Republicans nominated Lincoln and Hamlin; the Northern wing of the Democratic party, Douglas and Herschell V. Johnson; the Southern wing, J. C. Breckenridge and Joseph Lane; and finally the quickly organized Constitutional Union party brought out John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts. This last was derisively referred to as the "Kangaroo" ticket for the reason that Edward Everett, the candidate for vice-president, was a much abler man than Bell, the candidate for president. It is an interesting fact that while the last named was the only ticket of the four in the field that had the word Union as part of its designation, nevertheless, the man who headed this later became an avowed secessionist and cast his fortunes with the Confederacy.

That the newly formed Republican party with its avowed opposition to the further extension of slavery appealed specially to my immediate family need not be said.

I was too young to vote, nevertheless I attended a number of political meetings and listened attentively to the speakers, one of the most eloquent and effective of whom was the older Richard Yates who a little later became the distinguished "War Governor" of Illinois.

All over the country a great many marching clubs were organized by the Republicans under the name of Wide-awakes". These clubs were largely made up of young men who carried wooden spears in day-time and torches at night. They were for the most part a rollicking, joy-loving lot, and no one realized that within two or three years instead of bearing harmless wooden spears, they nearly all would be carrying muskets with which to cripple and slay their fellow-men.

The presidential election of 1860 fell on November 6, a day I shall never forget. There was a cloudless sky and the air was as warm and soft as May. "Just the kind of a day for the Democrats to lose," said one of the wise ones. And they did lose. The Republican ticket had 180 votes in the electoral college, a majority of 57 over all.

The Republican popular vote aggregated a little less than two millions; the Douglas wing of the Democratic party a little more than a million and a quarter; the Breckenridge wing not quite a million; and the Constitutional and Union party about six hundred thousand.

Eight years later the two wings of the Democratic party came together and have since been a unit. The Constitutional Union party died a natural death when the sun went down on the evening of November 6, 1860.

In less than six weeks after President Lincoln was inaugurated the first shot was fired in one of the greatest Civil Wars in history and, which before its close, was

destined to exact, as part of its toll, the lives of five hundred thousand young men, the very flower and hope of the land.* But great as was its cost, this struggle preserved the Nation, cemented the Union of the States, and forever settled "The Question of Questions."

*See "Muskets and Medicine" by the author.

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